THE LAST GUN

by

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and

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THE LAST GUN

1915.
Woodrow Wilson is President.
The Cubs lead the National League by three games.
Charlie Chaplin is the world's biggest film star.
One thousand Model T's come off the assembly line every day.
And the Old West is just something people write books about.

MONROE CITY. NIGHT.

Forty buildings, board sidewalks and a train depot.
Progress is here to stay.
Cars parked among the horses and wagons.
Electricity got here ten years ago.
Lights glimmer and blink.
One street, but a nice wide one.
They plan on paving it soon.
Two churches, a bar, and one whorehouse.
Brand new police station.
In modern times like these, no one wears hip guns anymore.
In front of the stationhouse one relic from the past ...
An old gallows.
Badly weathered.
No rope on the cross beam.
Matter of fact, there hasn't been a hanging for years.
Out of style in 1915.

CUT.

CHURCH. NIGHT.

Streetlights visible through the windows.
Heavy shadows between the pools of light.
Carved wood crucifix, chalice alongside.
The PRIEST reads from a prayer book.

PRIEST
... can show any reason why these two people should not be joined in holy matrimony in the sight of God, speak now or forever hold your peace.

He looks up at the congregation.

(CONTINUED)

Seven Whores and the Madam from the local house.
All dressed up for the occasion.
And one old-timer who never misses a wedding.
None of them have anything to say.

THE PRIEST

Turns to the couple before him.

PRIEST
Do you, Aggie Lafont, take this man to be your lawful wedded husband.

Aggie hesitates.
A long painful moment.

AGGIE LAFONT

Long tumbling dark hair.
Mouth with a natural pout.
Eyes that look past most objects.
And a lot of spirit.
She glances at the man beside her.
He's close to twenty years her senior.
The Priest clears his throat.
Aggie gathers up her courage, faces back to him ...

AGGIE
I do.

PRIEST
And do you, Willard Sloate, take Aggie to be your lawful wedded wife.

SLOATE
I do.

PRIEST
Then I pronounce you man and wife.

WILLARD SLOATE

Big, muscular; face blotched with alcohol ...
Hard years have lined his face.
He carries a battered Panama beneath his arm ...
Sloate gives her a tentative kiss on the cheek.

CONTINUED:

She scarcely responds.
The pianist strikes up the wedding march.

CUT.

RAILWAY DEPOT. NIGHT.

On the horizon a train pulls into view.
Westbound.
Station Master at his work.
A few townspeople waiting at trackside.

ENGINE NO. 5

Steams to a halt.
Freight cars and pullmans trail in its wake.
Several passengers disembark.

PULLMAN CAR

J.J. KELLS appears.
Early thirties.
Dark suit.
Town hat.
Starched collar.
Black tie.
Standing there with a suitcase in one hand.
Rifle scabbard in the other.

PLATFORM

Kells approaches the STATION MASTER.

KELLS
Excuse me. This is Monroe City.

The young man looks at Kells' Winchester scabbard.

STATION MASTER
For forty years now. Friendly town.

KELLS
Could you tell me where I can find the police station.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STATION MASTER
Down the street. Fifth door on the right.

KELLS
Thank you. Thank you very much.

Kells walks past.

CUT.

MAIN STREET

Kells walks down the sidewalk.
Passes the church.
The wedding congregation now on the steps.
A few sad handfuls of rice thrown on the newlyweds.
Aggie and Willard climb into a buckboard.

KELLS

Stops, watches.
Looks at Aggie.
She catches his glance as the buckboard lurches forward.

OUTSIDE THE POLICE STATION

Kells stops.
Looks up at the old gallows.
Then moves toward the doorway.

CUT.

POLICE CHIEF HARRY WALKER

A dapper man in his early thirties.
Got elected last spring.
Thinking about running for Congress in a few years.
Right now he's seated nice and comfortable on the porch reading a newspaper.
Sitting behind him in the open office is the town's only patrolman, MOON GRADY.
Younger than WALKER, towheaded, likes to grin ...
He's busy finishing up a carton of ice cream.
Then Kells walks up.
Looks at the two seated men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rests the Winchester scabbard beside him.
Leans on it.

KELLS
Excuse me, I'd like to know where to find the Combs ranch...Preston Combs.

Moon sets aside his ice cream carton.

MOON
That's easy. About twelve miles straight down the road. Make a right at the fork. Mile further on and you're there.

KELLS
Thank you.

Pause.

KELLS
Very much.

Turns to go.
But Harry Walker's not used to supplying information to a man with a Winchester.

WALKER
You got business with Preston Combs.

Kells and Walker stare at each other.

KELLS
I'm looking for his son.

WALKER
Any reason I should know about.

KELLS
Gishboy Combs and some friends of his raped a girl in the state of Colorado. He got two years on a work gang. Five months later he ran off.

Pause.

KELLS
I thought I might take a look myself, since you seem to be having trouble finding him.

CONTINUED:

WALKER
I'm not looking. My jurisdiction ends this side of the Combs place. Anything happens out there's got nothing to do with us.

KELLS
I guess that leaves room for me.

WALKER
You're not a policeman.

KELLS
Are you.

MOON

Watches the two men size each other up.

MOON
How come you making Gishboy your business.

KELLS
There's a reward of a thousand dollars.

MOON
I'll be goddamned.

Kells doesn't say anything.
A wall phone begins to ring.

KELLS
Better answer that.

WALKER
Here's some advice. Gishboy ain't much, but his old man is nobody you want to fool with. You get outside this town, he runs things.

Kells faces Walker for a long moment.
Then walks away.
Walker turns to Moon.
The phone continues to ring ...
The deputy has a very puzzled look on his face.

WALKER
Moon, answer the goddamn phone.

CUT.

DIRT ROAD. DAY.

Kells up on a big bay gelding.
For a man with a city look he has a good rein and seat.
He walks his horse off the dirt road near the stable area of the Combs ranch.
The Winchester scabbard across the saddle pommel.

CORRAL

Several ranch hands look up from their task of branding spring calves.
Watch as Kells passes by.

MAIN HOUSE

A two-story building in the Spanish style.
Courtyard in front flanked by olive trees.
Dodge touring car parked near the porch.

KELLS

Pulls the gelding up for a moment.
Looks across the courtyard, then walks the horse on ahead.

CUT.

PRESTON COMBS

A good sized man with the look of authority.
Mid-fifties, hair, moustache and beard neatly groomed.
Lying across the sofa in his living room.
JACK KEATON, his foreman, enters.

KEATON
Mr. Combs.

PRESTON
Yeah.

KEATON
Man outside want to see you.
Got a Winchester with him...

Preston looks up.

CUT.

PORCH AREA

Preston Combs steps out the front door, holding a carbine.
Keaton behind him.
Kells, still up on the bay, looms beyond.

PRESTON
Man comes on my land carrying a rifle, I like to meet him halfway. You and me supposed to have some business.

KELLS
Yes, sir. I'm looking for your son.

PRESTON
What's your name. I like knowing who I'm talking to.

KELLS
J.J. Kells. At your service.

PRESTON
Where you from, Mr. Kells.

KELLS
I just drift around.

PRESTON
You look like you're a long way from home.

KELLS
That's right, Mr. Combs. A long way.

PRESTON
Well, Mister Kells ... Gishboy's not here. I hope its not too big a disappointment to you ...

Kells gives him his best smile.

KELLS
It would be if I believed you.

Keaton shifts uneasily.
Preston remains very calm.

KELLS
I'm taking him back to prison.

PRESTON
Why.

CONTINUED:

KELLS
He did something that was wrong.

PRESTON
You make a living doing this kind of thing.

KELLS
Thousand dollars is a lot of money.

Pause.

PRESTON
Five months in jail was plenty long for what he done.

KELLS
I doubt if she sees it that way.

PRESTON
Sounds like you might know her.

Kells just looks at him.

PRESTON
Well, mister, I'll tell you. I like having my son around.

KELLS
The law says he owes them another year and a half.

PRESTON
You're not the law ... We got law around here. I deal with them.

KELLS
I ran into the man you're talking about.

PRESTON
How did you get on with him.

KELLS
I've met people like him before.

PRESTON
Harry Walker's got promise. He does a good job.

KELLS
Maybe with a son like yours, you need a friend like that.

CONTINUED:

Preston takes threee steps to his right.
Sits on the porch balustrade.

PRESTON
I'm tired of talking. You want my son, go ahead and try.

KELLS
Tomorrow morning I'll be out after him.

PRESTON
You're getting yourself into a real contest.

KELLS
It's between me and him. That's why I came out to your ranch. I wanted to tell you that. I don't hold you responsible for what he did.

PRESTON
That's mighty white of you ... Look, you don't catch on too quick. You try and take my son and I'll make sure it's the last time you ever to go out.

Kells keeps looking at Preston.

PRESTON
Good luck, Mister Kells. Now get off my land.

Kells tips his hat, turns his mount.
Spurs him off at a walk ...

PRESTON COMBS

Watching Kells go.

CUT.

MONROE CITY AUTO REPAIR AND LIVERY STABLE. DAY.

Behind the livestock area, a few broken down automobiles.
Kells rides the bay through the open double doors.
The BLACKSMITH, a huge black, washing up at a sink beyond.
Kells dismounts as the Blacksmith approaches, drying his hands and arms with a soiled towel.

BLACKSMITH
I told you he's the best leg I got.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KELLS
I'll buy him from you if he's for sale.

BLACKSMITH
Make me an offer.

KELLS
Most places a horse like this would sell for two hundred dollars.

BLACKSMITH
Well now, this ain't most places. He's a trained Cutter ... the price is three hundred and seventy five dollars.

KELLS
Three hundred.

BLACKSMITH
Done.

KELLS
Give him dry oats tonight. Have him saddled in the morning.

Turns to walk away.
Then turns back.

KELLS
What's he called.

BLACKSMITH
Robert E. Lee.

Kells thinks about that.

KELLS
I think maybe I'll change that.

BLACKSMITH
It's your horse.

KELLS
Ulysses S. Grant.

BLACKSMITH
Yeah. I like that.

A big smile.

KELLS
Have him ready by daybreak.

Moves away.

CUT.

HARDWARE STORE. DAY.

Kells at the counter.
Holding a Smith and Wesson .44.

COUNTERMAN
Don't sell many of these anymore. Most people want an automatic.

KELLS
Five boxes of shells.

COUNTERMAN
Anything else.

KELLS
I'll take that Parker you got in the rack.

COUNTERMAN
That old Parker's a ten gauge ...

KELLS
And five boxes of double-ought.

COUNTERMAN
You must plan on knocking a barn down ... I only got black powder in double-ought. That do you.

Kells nods, keeps ordering.

KELLS
Two blankets, lay aside some hardtack and traveling gear. One more thing, I'll need thirty feet of coarse rope.

Sticks the .44 in his waistband, puts two boxes of shells in his pocket.

KELLS
I'll pick it all up in the morning.

Places a wad of greenbacks on the counter.

KELLS
One more thing, I'd like to buy a file.

CUT.

STREET. DAY.

Kells moves toward the Rickabaugh Hotel.
Goes inside.
Still carrying his black suitcase.

CUT.

DIRT ROAD. DAY.

An Oakland four cylinder powering along.
Takes a right turn with a four-wheel drive.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

GISHBOY COMBS.
Callow beyond his youth.
More of an attitude than years.

THE OAKLAND

Slides through another turn.
Now driving hard for the ranch house.

PRESTON COMBS

Seated on the porch.

THE OAKLAND

Skids up in front of the house, braking noisily to a stop.
Gishboy moves to the porch.

PRESTON
Been someplace important.

GISHBOY
Just driving.

Gishboy goes inside the house.
Preston lights a cigarette.

GISHBOY

Emerging a moment later with a bottle of beer.
Leans on the porch rail.

PRESTON
Thought I told you to ask before you went off anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GISHBOY
Guess I forgot.

PRESTON
Fellow came by looking for you.

GISHBOY
The law.

PRESTON
Just somebody looking for a reward.

Broad smile from Gishboy.

GISHBOY
Funny all the attention I get for some little piece of cake. Nothing different from what you used to do.

PRESTON
If I did something I didn't get caught. And when I got some tail I didn't need two others to hold her down.

Gishboy takes a pull on the bottle.

PRESTON
This Mister Kells says he's going to take you back.

GISHBOY
Maybe I should go talk to him. Set him straight.

Long ash on Preston's cigarette ... flicked off.

PRESTON
You wouldn't last five minutes.

COFFEE and WASH, range hands, walk three horses toward the house.

PRESTON
You three are going up to the North Line right away. Lay up for a week or so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GISHBOY
God damn. I don't want to go up there. Especially if it's just cause of some drifter.

PRESTON
You do what I tell you.

Gishboy starts down the porch toward the car.

PRESTON
I'll settle this out, then you can come back.

GISHBOY
Take care of it as quick as you can.

He climbs back into the Oakland.

PRESTON
I'm not just going to do it, I'm going to have some fun with it ... Now get on up there.

Gishboy cranks the motor, throttles away.
Wash and Coffee mount up.
Coffee still holding the reins to the third horse.
He looks over to Preston.

PRESTON
Take the extra horse in case you have to move out to the hills ... Start riding.

Wash and Coffee swing off leading the extra horse.
Gishboy's car now in the distance.
Tearing up dust.

CUT.

MONROE CITY. NIGHT.

A few horses and cars.
Sound of a couple of loud drunks inside the bar.
Old man walking down the boardwalk, singing as he goes.

CUT.

HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

Kells seated on the bed, filing the front sight off his .44.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rasping sound.
He applies a last file stroke.
Checks the barrel for smoothness.
Puts the pistol on the night stand.
Stares for a moment at the revolver.
Then reaches up and turns off the naked electric bulb.

CUT.

MONROE CITY. DAWN.

Keaton, MORDECAI BROWN, JADE and FRENCH ride into town.
All of them tall range hands.
Preston Combs' men.
They tie their horses up in front of the hotel.
French and Mordecai Brown have axe-handles.
Jade carries a carbine.
Pause at the door.
Keaton looks at Jade, who takes the quiet signal and remains on the boardwalk.

HOTEL LOBBY

MRS. RICKABAUGH, serves as desk clerk.
An attractive woman in her mid-thirties, she owns the hotel.
Husband died and left it to her a few years ago.
Mrs. Rickabaugh is going over the account books as she is approached by Keaton and the two other men.

KEATON
What room's he in.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
Who you talking about.

KEATON
Your new guest. The one that walks around carrying a rifle.

She looks at the three men.
Decides there's no point in arguing.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
Mr. Kells is in Seventeen. Up the stairs on your left.

HOTEL ROOM

Dawn through the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kells at the basin, washing up for the day ahead.
Door kicked open.

KEATON
I'll get right to it. Nobody wants you around here.

Pause.

MORDECAI BROWN
It's simple. Gishboy ain't your business.

KELLS
Thousand dollars reward is a lot of money.

Pause.

KEATON
Nobody wanted this, Kells. You picked it ...

French raises his axe-handle.
Kells knocks the washbasin onto the floor.
Avoids French's swing.
Hits him in the middle with the basin stand.
Swings the stand, blocking the arc of Mordecai Brown's axe-handle.
Splinters the basin stand over his back.
Kells takes a punch from Keaton.
Then knocks him down.
Then kicks him.
Then picks French up and knocks him backward out the open doorway.
Mordecai Brown back on his feet.
Lands a left and right to Kells' head and body.
Kells punches him straight, then drives him out the door with a right hand.
Follows him to the stair rail and flattens him against it with another right.
Kells picks French up and kicks him down the stairwell.
Does the same with Mordecai Brown.
Looks for a moment.
Walks back into the room.
Keaton trying to get up.
Kells knocks him down again.
Then puts on his shirt and coat.
Slips the .44 in his waistband.
Lifts his suitcase.
Glances at Keaton.
Puts on his hat and walks out the door.
Kells moves downward, stepping over French and Mordecai Brown as he goes.

LOBBY

Kells comes to the desk, looks at Mrs. Rickabaugh.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
Who's going to pay for the repairs.

KELLS
Mrs. Rickabaugh, you might be a little more careful when you give out my room number.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
My apologies. But I didn't think I'd have the choice of arguing.

KELLS
I suppose you're right. I accept your apology.

He reaches down for his suitcase.

KELLS
As a favor keep an eye on this for me. I'll be back within a week.

Kells lifts his valise, drops it on the counter in front of Mrs. Rickabaugh.

KELLS
And send the bill for the damage to Preston Combs with my compliments.

CUT.

BOARDWALK

Jade standing by the horses in front of the hotel.
Carbine held loose.
Kells walks out.
Looks at Jade.
The pistol in Kells' waistband quite visible.

KELLS
Gishboy at the ranch or riding.

Jade glances at Kells' .44.

KELLS
Better tell me.

JADE
You know how to use that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Looks at the pistol again.

KELLS
Ask your friends upstairs.

Jade decides this isn't a good moment to get shot.

JADE
Riding.

KELLS
Which way.

JADE
North.

KELLS
You tell Preston I'm on the hunt.

Kells turns his back on Jade and moves away.

VOICE
Well, Mr. Kells, you come this far.

Kells turns.
Sees a big man with a weathered face.
Stetson hat.
Western gear.
Instead of making a threatening gesture, he simply falls into step beside Kells.

MAN
The name's Dempsey. Arthur J. Mighty pleased to meet you Mr. Kells.

KELLS
I'm glad to meet you Mr. Dempsey, but you'll pardon me if I'm in a bit of a hurry ...

DEMPSEY
Ain't no secret you're going out after Gishboy. That's why I'm saying hello ... The way I see it you need a little help.

KELLS
How's that Mr. Dempsey.

DEMPSEY
Preston Combs has got fifteen guns anytime he wants to call them out.

CONTINUED: (2)

Kells gives him a look.

DEMPSEY
You give me a hundred dollars, I'll string along, help you out when things get tight. Let me tell you something ... Arthur J. Dempsey knows how to handle a situation.

KELLS
I'm obliged to you for your offer, Mr. Dempsey. But I think I'd better go alone.

DEMPSEY
I'd think twice about that. I can shoot and I can ride ... The way I hear it you're new around here and you look like a city man ... Let me put it to you this way, the fellas you're going to run into out there on the hunt ain't from New Jersey. Or New York. Let me put it to you this way ... They ain't pussies.

Kells stops.
Smiles at Dempsey.

KELLS
I guess that means in a round-about way that I am.

DEMPSEY
I ain't insulting you. You went out to the Combs place. That took backbone. And you streetfought them boys upstairs. That was putting up a real good show ... But slap leather and straight shooting is a couple of other things. You might need a little help.

KELLS
I'm much obliged but I'll go it alone. *

DEMPSEY
Which way you traveling.

CONTINUED: (3)

KELLS
That's not your business, Mr. Dempsey.

DEMPSEY
I get the impression that you're real hard - headed Kells, but I doubt you know the lay of the land around here. Or how to track in open country ... A hundred dollars ain't a lot of money. I play the harmonica and I'm respectible company. Known for my amiable ways ...

Pause.

KELLS
Anything else.

DEMPSEY
Yeah. I don't like Preston Combs.

KELLS
Any special reason.

DEMPSEY
You met him ... He's a real prick.

CUT.

MONROE CITY AUTO REPAIR AND LIVERY STABLE. MORNING.

Double doors open.
Kells appears, up on U.S. Grant.
Winchester holstered by the saddle, shotgun across his lap.
Bedroll and full pack.
Dempsey on a pinto a few steps behind.

MAIN STREET

Now busy with the new day.
Model T gassing up at the pump in front of the Auto Repair.
Kells and Dempsey nudge their mounts over near the boardwalk.
A motorcycle passes by.
Townspeople turn and watch as they head for open country.

CUT.

HIGH PLAINS. DAY.

Kells and Dempsey, small, dust-covered figures on the landscape.
Walking the bay gelding and pinto across a stretch of badlands ...

CUT.

OPEN COUNTRY. DUSK.

Campfire in the distance.

KELLS

By the flames; he stands holding a tin coffee cup.
Looking off as the last sunlight breaks over the horizon.
Dempsey playing his harmonica.
A lively rendition of "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon..."
As it comes to an end.

KELLS
Do you know Tintorreto.

DEMPSEY
Can't say I do.

KELLS
A pity.

CUT.

OCHOS CASAS. DAY.

Eight dilapidated buildings near the rail line.
Behind the dwellings, a tall water tower.
Two weathered corrals.
An elderly man forks alfalfa to a mare, bony mule standing beyond.

KELLS AND DEMPSEY

Appear at the edge of the clearing.
Carrying two days of the trail with them.
U.S. Grant and the Pinto begin drinking from the trough.
Kells slides off and looks over the deserted village.

WILLARD SLOATE

He takes no notice as Kells remounts and rides to a stop alongside the corral.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KELLS
I watered my horse. I owe you some money.

SLOATE
The railroad owns the land and the well. Guess you owe them.

DEMPSEY
Doubt if we'll get around to telling them about it.

SLOATE
Guess I can do the same ... Got to put this mule in the other corral. He's been bothering the mare. Thinks he's a God damn stallion.

Sloate lifts the gate, takes the bridle and begins walking the mule, Kells and Dempsey riding beside him. They pass in front of the abandoned adobes.

KELLS
What happened here.

SLOATE
People tried to grow things. Too much alkali. Then they changed the track to wide gauge, no one needed to walk the line anymore ... No work. People moved out.

KELLS
You're the only one left.

SLOATE
Somebody's got to take care of the water station. Jobs don't come easy...

They continue walking.

KELLS
You seen Gishboy Combs.

Pause.

CONTINUED: (2)

SLOATE
He drove through here two days ago. Headed up towards the timber line.

They arrive at the second corral.
Sloate closes the gate, begins removing the bridle.
Kells looks down from his bay.
Chooses his words.

DEMPSEY
Gishboy a friend of yours.

Pause.

SLOATE
When the son of a bitch drove out of here, my new wife went with him ... He ever comes around here again, I'll shoot him.

Sloate looks away.
Kells nudges U.S. Grant from the corral and back toward open country.
Dempsey follows.
Willard Sloate doesn't bother watching them go.

CUT.

HIGH COUNTRY. MORNING.

Rim rock and a few pines.
U.S. Grant pulls Kells up a switchback toward the crest.
Dempsey on his pinto at the cliffside ...

RIDGE

Kells can see a line shack near a small stream in the valley below.
Three horses are ground-tied near the cabin.
The Oakland is parked off a packed dirt road beyond the shack.

DEMPSEY
That's them. Holed up bigger than hell.

Smiles.

KELLS

Looking, then gently urges the bay forward.

LINE SHACK

Wash comes out the door with a rifle, saddles up a paint, boots his gun and swings off.

RIDGE TRAIL

The cowhand walking his animal up the switchback.

WASH

Now well out of sight from the line shack.
Crosses through a gulley then heads upward.

TRAIL

Horse and rider appear from around a narrow bend.

DEMPSEY
Where you headed.

Wash comes to a nervous halt.
Looks up.

KELLS

On a high rock, above the trail.
Sitting very calm.
Shotgun leveled at Wash's chest.
Dempsey steps out onto the trail.

DEMPSEY
I asked a question.

WASH
Up the ridge. Supposed to see if anyone's coming.

KELLS
You ought to get up a little earlier in the morning.

Pause.

KELLS
You can lift that Henry rifle and let it fall.

The cowhand does just that.
Very slowly.

DEMPSEY
Got a name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WASH
Wash.

He looks up at Kells.

WASH
I don't want you to kill me.

His voice remains flat and calm, against the logic of his words.

KELLS
You go ahead and ride up that ridge. Then keep on riding.

WASH
What do I tell Mr. Combs.

KELLS
Tell him I got his son.

DEMPSEY
Tell him we got his son.

WASH
You ain't got him yet.

KELLS
Yes, I have.

Wash nudges his horse forward.

KELLS
Wash.

The rider halts, looks up at Kells.

KELLS
If you circle back, I will kill you.

LINE SHACK
Aggie Sloat lying on a bunk.
Fully dressed.

GISHBOY AND COFFEE

Playing five-card stud at a small table.
Two men bored with being holed up.

CONTINUED:

COFFEE
Just one damn time I'd like to get a card I need. Haven't seen a seven yet, don't seem to be any sevens in this deck ...

GISHBOY
When you're playing, don't play out loud.

Gishboy folds his face cards, tosses them in.
Coffee raking in the pot.

GISHBOY
I'm sick of hearing your voice. So why don't you shut up.

Hard looks across the table.

COFFEE
With that mouth of yours, good thing you got a father.

Gishboy flashes a big smile.

GISHBOY
No need getting upset. I just like it quiet.

Two windows on the side wall explode as a shotgun blasts twice.
Gishboy and Coffee roll across the floor.
Coffee crawling to his carbine.
Gishboy screaming in panic.
Aggie pulls herself off the bed with the first blast, rolls onto the floor next to the cot.

OUTSIDE

Kells, still on horseback, rides to the front of the shack.
Boots the .10 gauge, comes up with the Winchester.
Levers five rounds into the shack along the window line.

DEMPSEY

Behind a nearby tree.
He blasts away with his own carbine.

INSIDE THE SHACK

Coffee now has his rifle.

CONTINUED:

He jerks the action, but finds he has no target through the blown out windows.
Gishboy screaming as the slugs tear loose the pine wood three feet above his head.

GISHBOY
Christ, Christ.

COFFEE
Where's Wash.

GISHBOY
Jesus Christ.

COFFEE
Son of a bitch. Where is he.

OUTSIDE

Kells pushes the bay to the far side of the shack.
Sends five more screaming home.

INSIDE THE SHACK

Both men rolling on the floor in a lunatic dance as Kells' bullets rip through the thin walls.

AGGIE SLOATE

Now curled up into a ball.
Arms pulled up over her head.

KELLS

Turns U.S. Grant, retraces his path to the front of the shack.

DEMPSEY

Levers off four more shots ...

GISHBOY

Crawls to the entrance.
Rises on the side of the jamb, and pulls the door open.

KELLS

Moves to the corner of the shack.

CONTINUED:

Gishboy walks out, hands held high.
Turns and sees Kells for the first time.

KELLS
Have your friend throw down two saddle guns, then he can come out after the girl.

Gishboy faces the Winchester.

GISHBOY
Coffee. Throw out the carbines.

Gishboy partially turns, so that he can see Coffee behind him.

INSIDE THE SHACK

Aggie starts outside.
Coffee crosses to his bunk.
Pulls a Colt out of his bedroll. Runs it into his waistband behind his back.
Coffee gathers up the two rifles and throws them out past Gishboy and Aggie.

COFFEE
I'm coming out.

OUTSIDE

Coffee emerges, hands above his head.
His back kept away from Kells' line of sight.
Kells' gaze is directly at Gishboy.

GISHBOY
A thousand dollars ain't enough for what you're getting into.

Kells looks over to Coffee.

KELLS
Saddle the horses.

DEMPSEY

Moves across from Kells.
Covers Gishboy with his handgun.

COFFEE

Starts forward.

CONTINUED:

Passing between Gishboy and Aggie, he reaches behind him for the pistol.
Dives forward.

COFFEE

Takes two of Dempsey's bullets in the chest.
Dead as he hits the ground.
Got a shot off, but wide.
Now all quiet.

KELLS

Still facing Gishboy.
Looks over at Dempsey.
Then looks back at Gishboy.

KELLS
After you get done with the shovel, you're going to have to saddle your own horse.

AGGIE
Hey, mister.

KELLS
Yes ma'am.

AGGIE
What about me.

Pause.

KELLS
You better ride with us.

DEMPSEY
Not a bad idea.

CUT.

HIGH COUNTRY. DAY

Four riders in the distance.
Far country beyond.

KELLS
His prisoner's hand manacled with old-time prison irons.
A coarse rope around Gishboy's neck.
Kells never allows the line to go too slack.

AGGIE SLOATE

Riding off to one side.
Dempsey next to her.

CUT.

LINE SHACK. NIGHT.

Yellow lights show along the dirt road.
The Dodge turns down toward the cabin, comes to rest at the edge of the stream.
Headlamps illuminate the half-open door of the shack.
Preston Combs gets out of the car.
Splashing through the narrow rivulet, he moves toward the cabin.
Keaton and Wash light hurricane lamps and follow.
Mordecai Brown is left by the Dodge, trying to fire up his lantern.

WITHIN THE SHACK

Preston, Keaton, and Wash step inside.
The chaos revealed by the soft light from their lamps.

PRESTON. COMBS

Eyes moving.
Noting the disarray.
The chair and table knocked over.
The windows blasted out.
The bullet-torn walls.
A quiet moment.
Preston turns to Keaton.

PRESTON
You boys did a real good job on him back in town.

Turns and walks back outside.

FRONT OF SHACK
Mordecai Brown waiting near the door as Preston emerges.

MORDECAI BROWN
Mr. Combs.

Their eyes meet.
Mordecai Brown hesitates before telling him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORDECAI BROWN
There's a fresh dug grave out back.

Pause.

PRESTON
Somebody get a shovel.

CUT.

RANCH BUNKHOUSE. DAWN.

A large clapboard room.
Early light filtering through the curtained windows.
Four men asleep on low metal frame beds.
The door bangs open, French steps inside.

FRENCH
I want all of you outside right now.

CUT.

STABLE

WADDELL and DOYLE asleep in a small room at the far end of the stalls.
Keaton walks up the line of horses.
Moves into the room and switches on the light.

KEATON
Saddle up.

Waddell and Doyle sit upright.

KEATON
Get Larney's chestnut, bring the Appaloosa.

CUT.

OUTSIDE THE RANCH

LEMASTER and Jade lean against the Dodge.
HAYDEN and MCKAY come out of the bunkhouse pulling on their coats.
Preston Combs walks out onto the porch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carbine in hand.
He waits as Keaton leads the Appaloosa up from the stable.
Waddell and Doyle follow behind with three more horses.
Several more range hands assemble in front of Preston.

PRESTON
All of you know a fellow came by a few days ago. He brought his rifle with him.

Pause.

PRESTON
I tried to warn him off. But he came on anyway. Killed Coffee. Shot him down like he wasn't anything more than a coyote with his foot caught in a trap-line ... I don't think we should let him get away with it. What do you men think.

Ranch hand watching.

LEMASTER
Let's ride him down, Mister Combs.

PRESTON
I always figured anybody working for me was special. Now I know it ... He's got Gishboy and he's headed for Monroe City. That gives him two days ride.

Preston looks at his men.
Smiles with pride.

PRESTON
First water's Ochas Casas. Waddell, Doyle, Larney, come with me. We'll ride open country. The rest of you take the vehicles. You'll pick him up around Eloy in case he's taking the long way.

Preston comes down the porch steps.
Climbs up onto the Appaloosa.
Waddell, Doyle, and LARNEY mount up behind him.
Preston moves the Appaloosa at a slow walk between the men.
Pulls the horse to a stop.

CONTINUED:

PRESTON
He's not the law. He's just after a reward ...

Preston Combs swings the Appaloosa round.
Urges him into a hard gallop away from the ranch house.
Waddell, Doyle and Larney follow.

FRONT OF THE HOUSE

Keaton fires up the Dodge.
LeMaster, French and Jade climb in around him.
All with rifles.

BARN DOORS

Swing open.
A pickup truck steers out between the bales of hay.
Three range hands climb onto the flat-bed.

THE OAKLAND

Chugs to life.
Hayden at the wheel.
ROLLINS and STALLCUP in the back seat.

CUT.

THE DODGE

Leads the Oakland and truck away from the ranch.

CUT.

HIGH MESA. DAWN.

First light.
A rooster quail whistles.
Gets an answer.

KELLS

Finishes saddling U.S. Grant.
Pulls the Winchester from its scabbard.
Turns and leads his horse across the clearing.

GISHBOY AND AGGIE
Huddled beneath a blanket.
Aggie lightly sleeping.
Gishboy wide awake.

DEMPSEY

Making coffee.
He swishes his cup.
Cleans his throat.
Spits.

KELLS

Approaches his prisoner.
Kicks the sole of Gishboy's boot.
Aggie sits up shivering, pulls the blanket around her.
Gishboy reluctantly stands.

GISHBOY
Damn horse. I'm so stiff I can't hardly move.

Kells looks at him a moment.
Then leads his bay up a slope away from the clearing.

KELLS. MOMENTS LATER.

Sitting on the slope.
Waiting.
Aggie a few feet in front of him.

AGGIE
Where you going to turn him in.

KELLS
No reason not to take him back to the same place I started from. Monroe City.

GISHBOY

Finishes saddling the second horse.
A difficult task given the two-foot throw of his hand irons.
He leads the horses across the clearing toward Kells and the girl.

ON THE SLOPE

Dempsey stands as Gishboy arrives.

CONTINUED:

Drops the noose around his neck.

GISHBOY
You know Preston's going to be waiting no matter which way we go.

Dempsey snugs the rope under his jaw.

GISHBOY
He's going to have lots of company with him.

DEMPSEY
Get on up.

GISHBOY
Why don't you be real smart and let us go right here.

Aggie looks at Dempsey.
Then over at Kells.

AGGIE
You ain't going to talk them into it.

KELLS
He might.

Pause.

GISHBOY
Now you're getting the drift of things. How much.

KELLS
Thousand won't do it.

GISHBOY
Two thousand. Preston's good for that.

DEMPSEY
Sounds about right for my share.

He smiles.
Kells walks back past Aggie, ties the rope to his saddle.

KELLS
How about throwing in something else.

GISHBOY
Name it.

CONTINUED: (2)

KELLS
Her.

Aggie stares at Kells.
Then across to Gishboy.
The prisoner grins.

GISHBOY
She ain't too old but she's already a little on the used-up side ... or maybe you don't know about where she's been.

Kells smiles back.

GISHBOY
You want her, take her. She's just traveling company.

Kells looks over at Aggie Sloate.

KELLS
You really picked yourself a good one when you took him on.

Aggie walks over to Gishboy.
He sees he's been tricked.
Tries to smile out of it.

GISHBOY
I was only joking.

She hits him straight in the mouth.
A good solid punch.

AGGIE
You son of a bitch.

KELLS

Still smiling.

CUT.

HIGH RANGE. DAY.

Preston and his men on horseback.

WADDELL
I don't know how we lost them. Even with this goddamn hard ground we ought to be able to track.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESTON
I'll tell you how we lost him. We forgot how to track, that's how.

DOYLE
We ain't going to make it much further without getting some grub in our bellies.

PRESTON
Christ.

LARNEY
That gully up yonder ... That's a real good place for them to make an ambush.

Preston smiles.

PRESTON
Go on, ride up there and find out.

Larney hesitates.

PRESTON
Go on.

Preston and the others rein their mounts to a halt.
Larney rides forward.
Preston looks back at his men.

PRESTON
Next time I want advice from any of you I'll ask for it. Until then keep your mouths shut.

LARNEY

Reins up near the gully.
Turns back toward Preston and the others.

LARNEY
All clear.

PRESTON

Rides up to the gully, dismounts, looks at the far country beyond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOYLE
He ain't on this trail.

WADDELL
Maybe if we circle on back ...

LARNEY
He's probably gone up to the high buttes...

DOYLE
Want to try the butte country, Mister Combs.

PRESTON
Waste of time. He's on the other road back to Monroe City.

Pause.

PRESTON
I'm getting the feeling that he's probably having a little more fun than we are ... Maybe I ought to change sides.

Smiles.
And keeps looking at the far country beyond.

CUT.

HIGH RIDGE. DAY.

Kells, Dempsey, the prisoner and Aggie pull their horses to a slow stop.
Look down the slope of the hill.

VALLEY BELOW

Railway track.
Telegraph poles.
The town of Eloy visible in the distance.

CUT.

ELOY

A copper mine town of fifteen buildings.
The shaft at Eloy's center cuts into the base of a low mountain.
Trailings mark the area, forming dull grey hillocks.

SUPPLY STORE

Patrons browsing as a youthful company CLERK works behind the counter.

AN OLD COWBOY

Talking into the receiver of a wall-phone.
Knocked around longer than he wants to remember.

OLD COWBOY
... Nothing, Earl. Christ on a crutch, what's a man have to do to get work these days. How about over at the Timmons place.

The Cowboy glances out the store's front window.

HE SEES

Kells pass by in the street.
Rope still around Gishboy's neck.
Aggie riding a few paces to the side.
Dempsey following a few paces behind.

THE OLD COWBOY

Continues to look out the window.

CUT.

THE OLD COWBOY

Continues to look out the window.

CUT.

TELEGRAPH OFFICE

Gishboy standing at the counter.
TELEGRAM OPERATOR staring at Gishboy's noose.

KELLS

At a stand-up desk.
Sets aside a pencil and hands a telegraph form to the Operator.

KELLS
Read this.

CONTINUED

OPERATOR
Police Chief Harry Walker, Monroe City. Returning with my prisoner, Gishboy Combs. Yours sincerely, J.J. Kells.

KELLS
Sounds good. Guess you better send it ...

OPERATOR
One dollar.

Kells puts a greenback on the counter.
Watches as the Operator begins to tap the keys.

CUT.

OUTSIDE THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE

Kells and Gishboy approach the horses.
Aggie has remained up on her roan.
The Cowboy and the young Clerk lean against the hitching post.

OLD COWBOY
This is the kind of thing you don't see much anymore.

AGGIE
Don't get so excited. He's just hauling him in for some reward.

DEMPSEY
He knows what we're doing, sweet pea. Word's already gone around the whole country.

The Clerk looks over to Kells, then to Gishboy.
And the rope around his neck.

CLERK
Mighty funny way to bring a prisoner in ...

Except he doesn't think it's funny.
Kells undoes the reins to Gishboy's horse.
Gishboy climbs up, Kells does the same.
The Old Cowboy and Dempsey take a long look at each other.

OLD COWBOY
You got a familiar face.

The Old Cowboy decides to take him head on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD COWBOY
Matter of fact, I saw you a couple of years ago in Las Cruces ... They were bringing you in ... Five hundred dollar reward.

DEMPSEY
Yeah... And five years in Yuma Prison.

From the saddle Dempsey looks down at The Cowboy.

DEMPSEY
What occupies you these days, partner.

OLD COWBOY
Just drifting ... Might head past Monroe. Heard they're looking for hands down that way.

DEMPSEY
Scrub country.

OLD COWBOY
Can't be choosey anymore. Another ten years bush popping cattle will be all done. My kind of work is going to be hard to find.

KELLS
Times change.

The Clerk looks over at Gishboy. Then walks his way.

CLERK
What's your name, fugitive.

GISHBOY
Gishboy Combs.

CLERK
How much.

Gishboy goes silent.

AGGIE
Thousand dollars.

OLD COWBOY
Rewards have gone up. I can remember when you might have been worth a hundred at best.

CONTINUED: (2)

Aggie looks over at Kells.

AGGIE
I'm hungry, mister.

Kells boots his gun.
Looks at the Cowboy.

KELLS
Where do we get something to eat around here.

OLD COWBOY
You can get some chili and beans down at the way station. About as good as you can do in this town.

The four riders work their mounts away from the rail.

CUT.

OPEN COUNTRY. AFTERNOON.

Narrow stream cutting across a dirt-packed road.
Eloy long in the distance.
Kells leads the other three riders.
They splash through shallow water.
Then pull up the slope on the far side.

CUT.

LOW HILLS

They work their horses up the sweep of a rise.
Intersect another dirt road.
Turn down toward Monroe City.

CUT.

OCHAS CASAS. DAY.

Mule in one corral.
Mare in the other.
Sun high in the sky.
Silence.
Broken by Preston Combs leading the three ranch hands over the rise.

INSIDE THE DWELLING

Willard Sloate watches the riders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A little drunk and looking for a fight.
Sleeves rolled up.
Hands and arms stained with dirt.
He picks up his lever-action Springfield.
Slips a cartridge into the breech.
Steps outside.

FRONT OF THE HOUSE

Preston dismounts at the building.
Waddell, Doyle and Larney climb down, walk the horses to the well.
Carbine loose at his side, Preston moves toward the adobe.
Stops ten yards short of Willard Sloate.

SLOATE
What are you doing here.

PRESTON
Looking for my son. He might come past this way.

SLOATE
He was here, all right. A few days ago. The little peckerhead took my wife with him.

Sloate looks over to the men by the well.
Lifts the Springfield.

SLOATE
You can stay away from there.

The range hands move back a few feet from the well.

PRESTON
I heard your wife ran off with Gishboy. She didn't need no taking.

SLOATE
Some folks might say all this serves me right for marrying a girl that took to the fancy life, but I don't see it that way. I want her back.

PRESTON
She's got nothing to do with me.

CONTINUED:

SLOATE
I'm holding you responsible.

PRESTON
I don't give a goddamn what you think, Mr. Sloate.

The men watching from the well.

SLOATE
You better get on that horse and ride on out.

PRESTON
Just like that.

SLOATE
You heard me.

Gestures with his Springfield.

PRESTON
I'm awful tired of people standing in front of me with a gun. Used to be that I got a little respect around these parts.

Sloate looking at Preston.

PRESTON
Why don't you use it.

Pause.

PRESTON
Your wife's a whore and you're trash. Now use it.

SLOATE
Anything you want, Mr. Combs. Matter of fact it's bout time somebody paid you off.

Raises the Springfield.
Combs starts forward.
Sloate fires ... misses.

PRESTON
Use it, goddamn it, use it. Use it.

Continues walking forward.
Sloate fires again.
Again misses.

CONTINUED: (2)

Preston now firing with each step.
Three shots, all of them killing wounds.
Sloate flying backward.
Then falls dead.

PRESTON

Continues his walk to the body.
Lifts Sloate's Springfield.
Tosses the rifle aside.
Looks back at his men.

PRESTON
Let's move out.

Walks back toward the horses.

CUT.

ELOY

Preston Combs' vehicles parked outside the bar.
Engines running.
Men waiting.

KEATON

Comes out of the bar, climbs into the Dodge.
Guns the motor and drives hard up the road.
Truck and Oakland pulling out behind.

CUT.

THE FOUR RIDERS. AFTERNOON.

Move slowly down an open road.
Distant sound of a girl singing.

AGGIE

In full voice.
Gishboy rides nearby.
Rope around his neck.
Ten yards of lead line paid out from Kells' saddle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGGIE
It's a mighty funny sound.
It's a mighty funny thing.
Jada.
Jada.
Jada. Jada. Jing, Jing, Jing ...

KELLS

Easy in the saddle.

DEMPSEY

Riding side point.

VALLEY FLOOR

The four push ahead.
Gishboy decides to join in.
Aggie goes silent.

GISHBOY
Jada.
Jada.
Jada. Jada. Jing, Jing, Jing ...

Kells gets tired of Gishboy's voice.
Jerks the rope, abruptly ending the song.
A stretch of silence.
Then Dempsey rides close to Kells.

DEMPSEY
Figured you'd push the horses a little harder on into Monroe City.

KELLS
Tired horse can't run much when you need him to ... Besides I wanted to give you a better chance to steal the prisoner.

DEMPSEY
Thought about it. But his daddy might show up past that next rise. I could even need some help.

An arroyo cuts jaggedly across the plain far to their left.

CONTINUED: (2)

KELLS
Maybe we ought to head over to that dry wash.

DEMPSEY
Any special reason we ought to head that way ...

AGGIE
Three of them.

She's noticed what Kells already seen.
Dempsey's look follows Kells to a ridge behind them.
In the distance three plumes of dust above the roadway.

DEMPSEY
Well, goddamn me, looks like we're going to have some fun.

THE DODGE AND OAKLAND

Pulling to a halt on the ridge.
Jade hands Keaton a pair of binoculars.

THE TRUCK

Grinds to a stop beside the Dodge.
On the flat-bed McKay, Bodie and Wood lift their carbines.

VALLEY FLOOR

The four continue their walk in the open.
Kells unties the rope leading to Gishboy.
Hands it to Arthur J.
Spurs the gelding.
All the horses follow U.S. Grant into an easy gallop.

ON THE RIDGE

Keaton returns the binoculars to Jade.

KEATON
Aim clear of the chestnut.

He throttles the Dodge toward the valley floor.
The Oakland catches up with the truck.
Pulls in front of it.

THE FOUR

Crossing the valley floor toward the arroyo.

DODGE

Coming down onto the flat, pulls off the dirt highway.
Smashes through low brush.
The Oakland roaring along in its wake.
Further back the truck slows, bounces along the uneven ground.

KELLS
Leading the others toward the arroyo.
Pulls the bay over, makes for a large horseshoe bend formed by the wash.

THE OAKLAND

Nearing the Dodge.
Closing on the horses.

HAYDEN

In the back of the Oakland.
Snaps off a shot.
Wide.

KELLS

Enters the opening of the horseshoe.
Pulls the bay to a sliding halt.
Dempsey gallops straight on past him.
Gishboy close beside, Aggie following.
The horses race across broken ground toward the apex of the loop.

THE TRUCK

Falling further behind the cars.
Eases its way through clumps of small brush.

DODGE

French and LeMaster start levering shots at the riders in front of them.

KELLS

As the cars approach.
Pulls his Winchester up.
Sights.
Fires three times.

THE OAKLAND

Takes a hit on the side door.
One on the fender.
Makes a wild swerve as Kells' final bullet explodes the front tire.

DEMPSEY

Slows at the edge of the arroyo.
Works his horse down the steep slope to the bed of the wash six feet below.
Gishboy close behind.
The rope taut to his neck.
Aggie on the rim of the slope.
She starts down after Gishboy and Dempsey.

THE DODGE

A hundred yards behind them.
LeMaster firing over the windshield.

KELLS

Facing the Oakland as it closes on him.
Fifty yards distant.
Then forty.

THE OAKLAND

Twisting and swerving.
Bullet-ripped tire coming off the wheel.

STALLCUP, HAYDEN AND ROLLINS

Firing at Kells from the Oakland.

KELLS

His Winchester roars.

THE OAKLAND

As its windshield shatters.

KELLS

Spins the bay, races to the foot of the horseshoe.
Bullets kick beside him as he slides U.S. Grant
into the wash.

KEATON

Skids the Dodge to a stop where Dempsey went into the
arroyo.
LeMaster jumps out, runs to the edge.
Carbine held ready.

ARROYO

A narrow stream runs in the center of the wash.
Nothing else in sight.
The sound of hoofbeats can be heard from around the bend.
LeMaster runs back to the Dodge.

THE OAKLAND

Weaves toward the edge of the wash where Kells disappeared.
Then a bullet pounds into the radiator.
The car slows to a stop.
Radiator pouring steam.

KELLS

Comes up out of the wash fifty yards away.
Races across the flat in front of the Oakland.
Leaning low over the horse's neck he levers two
rounds through the windshield.
The next four shots crash into the door.

INSIDE THE OAKLAND

Hayden screams as a bullet rips into his thigh.
Stallcup and Rollins fire at the passing horse from
the back seat.
Kells swerves the bay back down the wash and out of
sight.

DEMPSEY

Halfway around the horseshoe from Kells
Pulled up in a brush-filled cranny.
Horses to one side.
Dempsey sights along his rifle.
Aggie screams a warning.
Dempsey is suddenly clubbed on the side of the head.
by Gishboy's manacled hands.
Dempsey slams Gishboy in the middle with his rifle butt.
Out of breath, Gishboy stands paralyzed.

DEMPSEY
You ought to learn to stay
out of my way, kid.

He slams Gishboy again with the rifle butt.
Knocks him spinning, all the way to the floor of the wash.
Dempsey turns back, once more sighting along his rifle.
Aggie near the prone Gishboy at the bottom of the arroyo.

AGGIE
Give me a gun.

DEMPSEY
Ain't got time, Sweet Pea.

He fires again.

ON THE FLAT

The Dodge almost abreast of Dempsey...
Moving slowly along the edge.
Searching.

THE TRUCK

Lumbers through the brush toward the horseshoe.

DEMPSEY

Triggers a bullet through the windshield of the Dodge.

JADE, FRENCH AND LEMASTER

Bring up their carbines.
Send a flurry of bullets into the dirt beside Dempsey.

DEMPSEY

Ducks down behind the rim of the arroyo.

KEATON

Struggling to steer the Dodge.
Windshield shattered before him.
French leans over his shoulder from the back seat.
Smashes the glass out with the stock of his rifle.
The Dodge passes Dempsey, making for the far end of the horseshoe.

AT THE OAKLAND

Stallcup and Rollins pull Hayden out of the car.
Leg bleeding.
They ease him down by the rear wheel.

KELLS

In the arroyo.
Tries a shot at the Oakland.
The bullet richochets off the fender.

STALLCUP

Peering from behind the car.
He sends a shot into the dirt beside Kells.

THE DODGE

Nears the foot of the loop.
Making for a slope leading down to the stream.

THE TRUCK

Now enters the horseshoe.

DEMPSEY

Looks back up over the edge.
Sends off two shots at the truck.
Answered by a volley of gunfire.
He pulls down out of sight.

KELLS

Firing at the Oakland.
Pinning the three men behind it.
Sees the truck advancing toward Dempsey.
And the Dodge working its way down on the far side

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

of the horseshoe.
Kells slides back down the slope.
Mounts U.S. Grant.
Spurs off along the wash toward Dempsey.

DEMPSEY

Fires at the truck.
The Dodge out of sight.
Truck moving very close.

KELLS

Astride the bay.
Riding hard along the narrow stream in the center of the arroyo.

THE DODGE

Moving up the floor of the wash toward Dempsey.

KELLS

Urging U.S. Grant along the curve of the arroyo.
Pounds by Gishboy and Aggie.
On the slope above, Dempsey looks around as Kells sweeps past.

AGGIE
God damn it, throw me a gun.

A very angry young woman.

FRENCH AND LEMASTER

In the back of the Dodge.
Carbines ready as the car works along the wash.

KELLS

Nears a sharp bend and pulls in the bay.
Swings to a running dismount.
Takes the shotgun from the saddle holster.
Stands ready in the middle of the wash.
A long moment.
Sound of an automobile engine.
The the Dodge comes round the corner, twenty yards away.
Kells' ten gauge blasts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Buckshot rips into the radiator.
The car swerves broadside.
Kells' second blast shreds the front tire.

LEMASTER

Jacks and fires at Kells as the Dodge crashes into the rock wall of the wash.
The bullet kicks at Kells' boot.
He moves back around the bend.

PRESTON COMBS' MEN

Leap out of the Dodge.
Scramble up the wall of the arroyo.

DEMPSEY

Blasting at the truck as it moves to the edge of the wash near the Dodge.
Covering fire from the truck as Keaton, Jade, French and LeMaster run across the flat.

KELLS

At the rim of the arroyo.
Snaps off a shot.
The slug creases French as he is pulled up onto the tailboard of the truck.

DEMPSEY

Climbing onto his horse.
Spurs it back along the stream, in the direction of the Oakland.

THE TRUCK

Seven men now on the tailboard.
It lumbers across the falt toward the men at the Oakland.

KELLS

Back up on the bay, riding along the wash.
He passes the abandoned Dodge.

THE TRUCK

Reaches the damaged Oakland.
Hayden is pulled onto the flat-bed.
Rollins and Stallcup climb up beside him.

DEMPSEY

Appears at one end of the horseshoe.
Levers a shot into the truck.
Smiles.
He's having a hell of a good time.

KELLS

At the opposite foot of the loop.
Urges the bay up onto the flat.
He and Dempsey have the truck in a crossfire.
Kells sends a shot into the fender.

CAB OF THE TRUCK

McKay panicking as bullets tear across the windshield.
Bodie at the wheel.

MCKAY
Get it out of here, God dammit.
Get it out of here.

The truck pulls away from the Oakland.
The men on the shaking tailboard firing at Kells and Dempsey.
Shots going wild as they jolt over the open ground.

KELLS
Watching the truck go.
Driving hard for the road back to Eloy.

THE OAKLAND

Kells walks his mount up to Dempsey and Aggie.
Gishboy lies on the ground a few yards distant.
The departing truck getting small on the horizon.

DEMPSEY
Sure would like to be there when they meet up with Preston Combs. They got an awful lot of excuses to make.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment of quiet.
Dempsey looks at the broken car.

DEMPSEY
My old dad thought the railroad changed the whole world. God knows what he'd think about automobiles.

Pause.

KELLS
He'd of probably bought one.

DEMPSEY
Probably ... Listen, if I get drunk, which is likely, don't let me get into a shooting contest with you.

Kells drops two shells into the .10 gauge Parker.
Snaps it shut.
Fires both barrels into the gas tank.
Enormous blast.
The Oakland bursts into flames.

KELLS
Progress.

CUT.

CROSSROADS. NIGHT.

Rolling countryside dimly visible in all directions.
Four horses ground tied.
Preston Combs waits in the middle of the road.
Waddell, Doyle and Larney to one side.
In the distance twin headlamp beams come over a rise.

THE TRUCK

Grinding to a halt.
Preston walks slowly round to the tailgate.
Looks at the tired men in the flat-bed.
Keaton drops down beside him.

KEATON
He picked up another rider. They got into a dry wash. Caught us in the open. We lost the cars.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESTON
Gishboy.

KEATON
Seemed all right. They got a girl along as well. Be in Monroe City tomorrow.

Preston looks at Keaton a long moment.

PRESTON
You can ride my horse back.

He opens the cab door, climbs inside. The truck roars off into the night.

CUT.

ARROYO. NIGHT.

Dim light from a quarter moon.
A small campfire near the stream.
The horses farther down along the wash.

DEMPSEY AND GISHBOY
Dempsey standing guard near the manacled prisoner.

GISHBOY
You know you got a real talent for business, Dempsey.

DEMPSEY
Mr. Dempsey to you, kid...Now you can tell me what you're talking about.

GISHBOY
I'm talking about you only getting a hundred dollars. And you ain't even started working yet.

Dempsey grins.

DEMPSEY
I just got to make sure I don't get killed.

KELLS AND AGGIE

Twenty yards distant.
Half-shadowed by the fire.
Forking beans from tin cans.

AGGIE
You feeling all right.

KELLS
I suppose that means that you don't.

AGGIE
I don't know what it means, but I'll tell you how I feel ... I'm feeling mighty glad this day's over.

KELLS
It didn't look too promising for a while.

Kells looking off down the darkened arroyo.

AGGIE
I'm an expert on poor ways to make a living ... and I'd say you really picked one for yourself if going after rewards is your calling.

KELLS
This isn't what I do for a living.

AGGIE
How come you stay at Preston and Gishboy. They ain't worth it.

KELLS
Somebody's got to do it. Once you start it's not easy to change horses.

AGGIE
People do it all the time. That's how things get better ... progress.

KELLS
Everything fast and new.

AGGIE
Sounds good to me.

The pair stare at each other for a moment.

CONTINUED:

KELLS
That's fine so long as you don't end up with a Gishboy.

Aggie now very angry.

AGGIE
You're a real righteous man, Mister Kells. Got everything all figured out. Got all the answers. You see me get married, couple of days later you see me run off with somebody else. So you think you've got me clocked right down to the minute ...

Pause.

AGGIE
Worse part about it is, maybe you have. Here, why don't I tell you a little more about my background ... It'll help that highly developed sense of righteousness that you carry around on your back ...

KELLS
I think I can guess. I don't need things spelled out.

Pause.

AGGIE
Good night, Mister Kells. Sweet dreams.

She starts away from the campfire.
With a bit of a huff.

GISHBOY

Looks up as Aggie walks past him and disappears into the dark.
Then he looks over to Kells standing by the fire.

CUT.

MONROE. AFTERNOON.

Five cars in the street.
A couple of trucks.
Horses and buckwagons.
Quiet mid-day activity.

FOUR RIDERS

Appear at the edge of town.
Kells reins the big bay in.
Looks at Gishboy.

KELLS
You're going to walk the rest of the way.

Gishboy hesitates.

GISHBOY
Treating me awful bad for getting under that mackeral snapper's skirt.

Kells jerks him off his horse with a tug of the rope.

AGGIE
Next time you want to give that rope a jerk, let me do it.

Kells smiles.
One of his rare ones.

GISHBOY

Leading the caravan into town.

MAIN STREET

Gishboy and the three horsemen come down the center of the avenue.
Townspeople begin coming out of the shops and down off the boardwalk.
Mrs. Rickabaugh and the Blacksmith among them.

KELLS

Just riding.
Very calm.
Aggie a little sullen.
This town doesn't have any happy memories for her ...

GISHBOY

Wearing his rope collar.
Walking along.
Head down.

STREET

The entire population of Monroe City is now on the avenue.
They join the rear of the procession as it moves to the police station.
Curious faces.
Not the kind of thing they're used to seeing in 1915.

POLICE CHIEF HARRY WALKER

Seated on the porch in front of his office.
Feet on the rail.
He stands as the caravan moves toward him.

KELLS

Reins up in front of Walker.
Dismounts.
Leads Gishboy up to the police chief.
Crowd very quiet behind.

KELLS
You get my telegram, Sheriff.

WALKER
I got it.

KELLS
That means the state officer's on his way.

WALKER
Never got around to ringing him up. Didn't figure you'd make it back.

KELLS
I did have a couple of problems on the way.

WALKER
I don't want to hear about it. I told you where my jurisdiction ended ...

KELLS
We're inside the city limit now. Put him in a cell and make that phone call.

Not a happy moment between Walker and Kells. Moon comes out on the porch.

GISHBOY
You do, my old man's not going to be happy about it.

WALKER
You stay quiet.

MOON
What do you want me to do, Harry.

All eyes on Harry Walker.

WALKER
Nothing to do but lock him up.

CUT.

BACK OF THE POLICE STATION

Two cells eight feet square.
Kells, Moon and Gishboy beside the cages.
Dempsey and Aggie behind.

MOON
Take your pick.

GISHBOY
Don't matter to me. I'm not going to be here long.

Walker comes through from the outer office.
Opens the left hand cage.
Pushes Gishboy in.
Turns the key.

MOON

Looking over at Aggie.
Likes what he sees.
Gives her a smile and a wink.

AGGIE

Stares back.
Unamused.

WALKER

Looks at Kells for a moment.

WALKER
Leave an address. I'll have the state mail you the money.

KELLS
I think I'll wait around here for my reward.

Kells holds Walker's gaze.
Then turns and goes to the door.
Dempsey and Aggie follow.

OUTSIDE THE POLICE STATION

Kells steps down off the boardwalk and takes the reins of his bay.
Looks to Aggie.

KELLS
Better go over to the hotel and get a room.

AGGIE
I can't afford no hotel.

KELLS
Put it on my account.

AGGIE
I don't want to owe you.

KELLS
Got a real chip on your shoulder.

AGGIE
That's not it.

Pause.

AGGIE
Being in debt to someone makes me nervous.

Pause.

AGGIE
You know what I mean.

KELLS
I know what you mean.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

KELLS (CONT'D)
But look at it this way, what other choice do you have.

He walks U.S. Grant off through the crowd of onlookers.

PORCH

Dempsey watches Kells moving up the street. Steps back into the station house. Walker steps up beside him.

DEMPSEY
Kells didn't get around to introducing us. My name's Dempsey. Arthur J.

WALKER
You got business with me.

DEMPSEY
Just want to make sure the prisoner's looked after right.

WALKER
What's a saddle-stiff like you got to do with Gishboy.

DEMPSEY
I was thinking I could help you out. Ride Gishboy up to the Capitol before Kells knew what happened.

WALKER
Relieve me of my responsibility.

DEMPSEY
A hundred dollars of that reward could be yours.

Walker looks steadily at Dempsey.

WALKER
I'm not for sale. If I needed a hundred dollars, I'd lock you up, go through the back posters, and come up with a reward of my own.

Big smile from Dempsey.

CONTINUED:

DEMPSEY
Now, Mr. Walker, I paid my debt to society.

Walker's not amused.

WALKER
Maybe you ought to plan on staying out of debt for a while.

DEMPSEY
Wasn't counting on persuading you. Just couldn't help asking.

Walker walks inside the station.

CUT.

MONROE CITY AUTO REPAIR AND LIVERY STABLE

Small truck propped sideways with a crossbeam under the front axle.
Blacksmith working at his anvil, fire behind him.
Hammering a bent wheel.
Kells leads U.S. Grant through the open door.

BLACKSMITH
Looks like he'll be needing a feed and a scrub down.

KELLS
I want to sell him back.

BLACKSMITH
From what I hear you might still be needing him.

Kells just looks at him.
The Smith walks around the bay gelding.

BLACKSMITH
Two fifty's the best I can do.

KELLS
Hey, wait a minute. He was worth three fifty a few days ago.

BLACKSMITH
Man's got to make a profit. Besides, looks to me like he's had a hard week.

CUT.

HOTEL LOBBY

Mrs. Rickabaugh behind the desk.
She looks up, sees Kells in the doorway.
Winchester and shotgun in one hand.
Saddlebag over his shoulder.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A man tacks a sign above a raised platform.
The sign reads:

ANNUAL STREET DANCE
MONROE CITY HOTEL

KELLS

Crosses to Mrs. Rickabaugh.

KELLS
I need my room back for a couple of days.

She pulls Kells' black suitcase from under the counter.
Takes a key from the rack.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
We're still fixing the furniture in seventeen. Better take another one.

KELLS
Which room's the girl in.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
You mean the one you're paying for.

Gives him a look.

KELLS
That's right.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
Eleven. At the top of the stairs.

Kells takes the suitcase and starts across the lobby.

HOTEL BATHROOM

Aggie in a tub.
Soaps herself vigorously.
A knock at the door.
She rises, covers herself with a towel.

HOTEL ROOM

Another knock on the door.
Aggie cracks it open.
Kells standing there.

AGGIE
What do you want, Mister Kells.

KELLS
Just thought I'd pay a visit.

AGGIE
Just see if I was okay ...

Pause.

AGGIE
Come on in.

He enters.
The door shuts.
She turns to him.

AGGIE
You know I don't like you much, but at least I had the idea that you were a little different ... Like usual I'm wrong.

She opens her towel.

AGGIE
How do you want it. French style or straight up.

He reaches out, takes her arms.
Closes the towel.

AGGIE
What's the matter ... Maybe you just need to relax for a while.

Long look from Kells.

AGGIE
I guess I was right about one thing, you are real righteous. Probably thought you were saving me from all this depravity in my life ... Don't bet on it ... Truth is for girls like me the depravity's half the fun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KELLS
You finished.

AGGIE
Not quite. The way I call your game is this. First you save me from my awful fate, then you get me all nice and dependent where I got to be real thankful, then you're feeling real good about yourself but you notice one more thing, the old Adam, so you came up here and then because you hero types get nervous sometimes in the little quiet moments, 'whoops there it goes, lost it,' all that business, then you fall back on the old 'above it all, high and mighty' pose. How am I doing.

KELLS
I guess if I stand here long enough and keep listening to you, some day you'll get something right.

AGGIE
Okay, Mister Kells. Your turn. Why'd you come up here.

KELLS
To tell you that I'll have somebody take you home in the morning.

AGGIE
I'm done living in that whistle stop.

KELLS
You got other relatives around here.

Shakes her head.

AGGIE
I'll go up to Jefferson, find some work.

Pause.

CONTINUED: (2)

AGGIE
My husband's a drunk and once a day the train comes through. For conversation, the only thing he talks about is how he saved me from being a whore.

Pause.

AGGIE
Given what I just said, would you go back to him.

After a second Kells moves away.
She looks after him.
Closes the door.

CUT.

MONROE CITY. NIGHT

Very quiet.
Only the bar and hotel are lit up.
Five cars parked on the street.
No horses.

POLICE STATION

Kells seated behind Walker's desk.
.44 on the table top.
Shotgun alongside.
Winchester leaning against the wall.
Moon seated at his small desk.
Finishing dinner and spinning the kind of story an ex-athlete generally does.

MOON
I had the best right arm in this state. Nothing but fastballs, didn't need no other pitch. Scout for the Tigers came along and said I could put my hard one right by Cobb. Had me all set to sign a contract. Got one of them damn motorcycles. Tried it out, fell off and hurt my shoulder. Fastball never was the same after that. Matter of fact, they didn't build ball parks big enough for the way they got to hitting me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Police Chief Harry Walker walks into the office. A hard look at Kells.

WALKER
You don't mind if I stop in now and then.

Then glances at Moon.

WALKER
Moon, you go on out and get some dinner.

MOON
I just ate.

WALKER
You go on out anyway.

Moon rises, shrugs and walks out. Walker pulls a chair up to the desk.

WALKER
Let's you and me talk.

Kells looking at him.

WALKER
Preston Combs might ride in here any minute with a lot of guns.

Pause.

WALKER
My town's liable to get shot up ... You hear me.

KELLS
He'll come in and talk first.

WALKER
You figure things awful close.

KELLS
Not everything. Where do you stand.

WALKER
I got a responsibility to this town. They elected me. They expect me to protect their lives and their property.

KELLS
Sounds good.

CONTINUED:

Pause.

WALKER
Okay, mister. This is my jail. You go on back to the hotel. I'll take care of the prisoner.

Kells looks at Walker.
Stands.
Gathers his firearms.

WALKER
One more thing. I don't have to remind you just because someone's got a reward on their head don't mean it's license for shooting a lot of other people.

KELLS
You got the speeches worked out... But when Preston comes in you're going to have to make a choice.

WALKER
Look, Kells, I don't like the way things are around here any better than you do...I'm a practical man, some things are beyond my control.

Pause.

KELLS
Don't ever apologize, Sheriff. It's a sign of weakness.

Opens the door.
Walks out.

CUT.

BOARDWALK. NIGHT.

Moon and Aggie walk toward the hotel.
Pools of yellow light from the street lamps.

MOON
You know when I get some cash together I might buy a place around here. Always helps if a peace officer is part of the community.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGGIE
Sure thing, sweet little wife, paint the house once every two years, tuck in the kids, put out the cat.

MOON
You making fun of me.

AGGIE
What's it sound like.

MOON
If you're so smart, how come you run off with a no account like Gishboy Combs.

AGGIE
I ain't sorry for what I did. I'm just sorry who I did it with.

MOON
Well, a girl like you is always going to have some prospects.

A smile from Moon as he nominates himself for the job.

AGGIE
Next time I plan on being a little more particular.

Moon's smile fades.
They walk by.

CUT.

TOWN SQUARE

The Annual Dance in progress.
Monroe City turned out in its finest.

ON THE PLATFORM

The bass player catches sight of him.
Loses the beat.
The dancers follow his look.
Come to a standstill.
All quiet for a moment.
Moon and Aggie watching from the center.

MRS. RICKABAUGH

Near the platform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Watching Kells.

KELLS

Takes the guns in his other hand.
Starts across the center of the dancers.
Passes Moon.
Gives him look.
The band starts up again.
Kells approaches Mrs. Rickabaugh.

KELLS
Polite society.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
It's a mighty polite town.

He faces the dancers.
Looks over to Mrs. Rickabaugh.
She returns his stare.
A moment.
Then Kells lays his rifle and shotgun against a wall.
Pulls his .44 from his waistband.
Places it on building ledge.
Walks over to the podium ...

ON THE PODIUM

The band is finishing ...
Kells steps onto the riser, moves to the piano ...

KELLS
Would you mind.

COWBOY PIANIST
Be my guest.

Kells sits at the keyboard.
Begins playing a slow waltz ...
A slow, dreamy number ...
The rest of the band finally joins in ...

DEMPSEY

Appears at Mrs. Rickabaugh's side.

DEMPSEY
Could I have this dance, ma'am.

A moment.
She smiles.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
My pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes her arm, leads her onto the floor.
They begin to dance.
Gracefully, making full turns to the waltz.
Other dancers watch them.
Surprised faces.

DEMPSEY AND MRS. RICKABAUGH

As the other dancers fall in ...
The music continues.

DEMPSEY
Tell me, Mrs. Rickabaugh, is your husband ever around.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
He died a few years back ... heart attack. Real sudden. Forty-five years old.

DEMPSEY
I'm sorry to hear it.

CUT.

MOON AND AGGIE

Watching, smiling as the couples dance before them.
They move out onto the floor.

KELLS

Still playing the piano ...
A total concentration on the keyboard.
He plays well, without hesitation or embarassment.

AGGIE

Dancing with Moon ...
But watching Kells as he plays.

CUT.

HOTEL CORRIDOR

Moon walking Aggie back to her room.
The Deputy is all aglow from his efforts at dancing.

MOON
Always good to get them feet a going ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They approach her room.

MOON
And I don't mind saying that you make a mighty fine partner.

AGGIE
For dancing.

MOON
For dancing and maybe a little more.

AGGIE
What do you have in mind.

MOON
I'm going to try to be real forward, Aggie ... How about letting me stay the night. Fellow gets lonely around these parts.

Pause.

MOON
I never visited you at Mrs. Patterson's, but I used to think about it ... Always wanted to. Sometimes I used to see you walking around the streets in the middle of the day ... always thought you were the prettiest girl in this town.

AGGIE
So why didn't you come and see me.

Pause.

MOON
Couple of reasons. I couldn't afford it. They always told me you got forty dollars. That's as much as I make in a month ... And another thing... I'm kind of shy. I get nervous ... Matter of fact, I never went to Mrs. Patterson's for you or anyone else.

AGGIE
Do you have a girlfriend.

CONTINUED:

MOON
Not lately.

Pause.

MOON
Only had two girlfriends in my life ... Truth is I din't like either of them very much.

Aggie smiles.

AGGIE
Are you offering to pay me for the night.

MOON
I figured you don't follow that end of things anymore.

AGGIE
That's about as close as I ever get to a compliment.

She kisses Moon.
Opens the door to her room.
Looks back.

AGGIE
In case you haven't heard, I'm a married woman.

Starts inside.
Looks back again.

AGGIE
Good night.

The door shuts.
Moon just stands there a while.
He can't quite figure out whether or not he's made any progress.

CUT.

HOTEL ROOM

Dempsey in bed with Mrs. Rickabaugh.
Neither of them seems to be dressed.
Mrs. Rickabaugh lights a cigarette.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
You didn't seem to mind switching rooms for the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEMPSEY
Just wanted to keep the management happy.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
In case you think otherwise, it's not exactly hotel policy ...

She takes a puff.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
Any chance you'll be staying a while.

Exhales.

DEMPSEY
Kind of doubt it.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
People say you've got reason to move fast ... It's a real wonder, I can always figure a way to pick the wrong one.

Takes another puff.

MRS. RICKABAUGH
All this trouble you and Kells brought with you ... If you're going to push on to someplace else, do it before you and Preston get into it. I live in this town ... I don't want to see anybody get killed.

Another exhale from Mrs. Rickabaugh.

CUT.

AGGIE'S ROOM

A knock on her door.
She drowsily opens it ...
Kells standing there.

AGGIE
You come to give me another lecture.

KELLS
Not this time.

AGGIE
What then ...

CONTINUED:

He smiles.
Kisses her.

AGGIE
I knew it was just a matter of time.

KELLS
You were right.

She kisses him back.
Then looks at him ...

AGGIE
Isn't this against all those principals of yours.

KELLS
You sure talk a lot.

Kisses her again.

CUT.

MAIN STREET. MORNING.

People shopping.
A horse drawn buggy outside the Post Office.
Truck delivering goods to the General Store.
Dempsey comes out of the livery stable.
Spent the night there.
And looks it.

PRESTON COMBS' TRUCK

Appears at the edge of town.
Drives up the street, passing Dempsey.

POLICE STATION

The truck comes to a halt.
Preston Combs gets out, walks into the station house.
French, Keaton and Jade stay on the truck.
No guns.
Just waiting.
Dempsey crosses the street.
Watches from a distance.

POLICE STATION

Preston enters.
Looks over to Police Chief Harry Walker.

PRESTON
There's a body out of Ochas Casas. Willard Sloate. He tried to kill me. I shot him.

WALKER
You got witnesses.

PRESTON
I just told you what happened.

WALKER
And I asked if you had witnesses.

PRESTON
I got three in the truck. Go talk to them. Now I'm going to see my son.

Preston moves by Walker and heads for the cell area beyond the door.
Walker goes out the entrance, toward the truck.

CUT.

CELLS

Preston appears in the doorway.
Gishboy standing at the door of his cage.

GISHBOY
Been wondering how long you'd leave me here.

Preston moves close to the cell.

PRESTON
Amazing how I can raise a son so God damn dumb he can't even hide.

GISHBOY
Wasn't my fault...That son of a bitch sneaked up on us. Shot Coffee in the back. No point in getting myself killed. *

Preston is used to the lies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESTON
I dug Coffee up. He took two hits, both in the front.

GISHBOY
Front or back, who cares. We got other things to worry about.

PRESTON
You're finally right about something. That chippie you picked up ... her husband didn't take to it.

Pause.

PRESTON
I had to kill him.

Pause.

PRESTON
Think about that for a while.

He turns away from Gishboy.
Heads for the door.

GISHBOY
You just going to leave me sitting here. A man's coming to take me back to prison.

Preston turns back, stares at Gishboy for a moment.

PRESTON
I'll get you out.

Pause.

PRESTON
You know, someday you're going to have to face up to things.

GISHBOY
Still trying to tell me about being your son.

PRESTON
I'm not talking about living for me ... You live these kind of lies, you're the one that gets cheated ...

Preston walks out.

CUT.

OUTSIDE THE STATION HOUSE

A small crowd has gathered.
Dempsey stands at a rail across from the truck.
Kells leans against the gallows.
.44 showing in his belt.
Watching as Preston Combs emerges from the station house.

HARRY WALKER

On the porch.
Gets a look from Preston as he passes across the board-walk.

KELLS *

Preston walks toward him.
The two men look at each other for a long moment.

PRESTON
It looks like you got things going your way.

Pause.

PRESTON
I'm a generous man, Kells. I'm going to make you an offer ... Two thousand dollars plus expenses. I want Gishboy out of there ... I'll even forget about all the trouble you caused me.

KELLS
I want my reward from the State, Mr. Combs ... It makes it more official.

PRESTON
If you don't let him go, I'm coming in to take him.

KELLS
I thought those days were all done.

PRESTON
I'll tell you about those days, Kells ... when I came to this country you weren't even thought of yet ... We had rough times, me and a lot of other men ... I got a bad leg yet from a bullet somebody put there in a little argument over a boundary ... We made this country. We found it and made it, with work, sweat and

(MORE) (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESTON (CONT'D)
backbone ... Some of us died doing it, but we made it. Then other people move in, they fence off the range; some of them plow, some tend stores, some try to do what I do ... I made it possible for all of them to be here ... You say I don't have the right to be what I am ... I say that I did the work and ran the risks. That gives me the right...

KELLS
I know what you and the others did. But that doesn't mean that anything you say should be treated like it was the law.

Pause.

PRESTON
I'm done talking ... When I come in this town's going to get shot up. A lot of people are going to get hurt... Now how do you like your contest.

KELLS
I'm just waiting around for my reward.

Men watching from the truck.
Very quiet.

PRESTON
It's all up to you.

A long wait.
ThenPreston walks back to the truck.

Opens the door.
Looks up at Harry Walker on the porch of the station house.

PRESTON
If I were you, I'd have a talk with him.

WALKER
I did. You can see how good he listens.

PRESTON
It's your town, Harry.

CONTINUED:

Preston gets into the cab.
The driver kicks the engine over.
Throttles the truck away.

WALKER

Comes down the porch steps.
Moves to the gallows.

WALKER
You satisfied.

Kells looks at him.
Turns, walks away.

WALKER
Christ.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP. AFTERNOON.

Kells getting a shave.
Dempsey seated across the way thumbing through the Saturday Evening Post.

DEMPSEY
Kells.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A few more pages turn.

DEMPSEY.
Something I better tell you.

KELLS
Smells like a confession.

DEMPSEY
I tried to help you out with Gishboy. Offered to take him off Walker's hands. Steal him down to the capitol before anybody knew what happened.

KELLS
Guess you underestimated the local police force.

DEMPSEY
People always pick the damndest times to have principles.

The barber works around to the other side of Kells' face.

KELLS
You better ride on out, Arthur J. You've earned your money.

DEMPSEY
Think I'll stay in it. This kind of thing don't come along much anymore.

Kells looks at Dempsey in the mirror.

DEMPSEY
This is going to be just like the old days.

Smiles.

CUT.

COUNTRY ROAD. DAY.

A dusty unsurfaced trail winds out of the hills. Side of the road bordered by wire fences. A small flat-bed truck comes down the path.

IN THE FLAT-BED

The body of Willard Sloate.
Covered by a tarpaulin.

CUT.

MONROE CITY. LATE AFTERNOON.

The truck appears at the edge of town ...
Drives up Main Street to the police station.

AGGIE

Comes out of the Rickabaugh Hotel.
Kells and Dempsey on each side of her.
The vehicle passing before them.

POLICE STATION

Tire squeal and dust cloud as the truck twists to a halt.
Moon behind the wheel.
He gives the horn a loud blast.

CHIEF HARRY WALKER

Comes out the office door.
His eye takes in the blanket-wrapped body.

MOON

Moves to the gate of the truck.
Looks up at Walker.

MOON
Shot him up real bad, Harry.
Dead as all hell.

AGGIE

Between the two men.
Slowly walking toward the truck.

CUT.

POLICE STATION PORCH. NIGHT.

Kells seated in Harry Walker's wicker chair.

CONTINUED:

On either side of him the shotgun and Winchester. Aggie approaches him, coming up the boardwalk.

AGGIE
You going on to dinner.

KELLS
Not tonight.

AGGIE
Thought I might like some company. Gishboy don't need that much guarding.

Kells stands.
Leans against the porch rail.

AGGIE
You really hate him, don't you. You must or you wouldn't take on Preston.

Pause.

AGGIE
Did you ever meet the girl that got him sent to jail.

Kells looking out at the dark street.

KELLS
I only want to see Gishboy pay his debts.

AGGIE
When I went off with him, I didn't know about her ... I wanted you to know that.

Kells turns and looks at her.

AGGIE
I went to see the priest. He's going to have a service ... My husband wasn't much but it would be kind of nice if there were a few people there in the morning.

Pause.

CONTINUED: (2)

AGGIE
Never thought he'd get himself killed on account of me. Just like him to leave me with that to think about.

KELLS
Sounds like he stood up to Combs. There's worse ways to get killed.

AGGIE
I'll tell you something. Even though he's dead, I still hate him.

She starts away, then turns back to Kells.

AGGIE
How about answering a question. You walk around here like you can go anywhere and do anything you want ... Don't you ever worry you might be wrong about something. With Gishboy it's like you're getting even. That ain't right.

KELLS
If I was getting even I'd try harder.

AGGIE
Not with Preston and Gishboy ... You're pushing real hard.

KELLS
I always give people a choice.

Pause.

AGGIE
I been thinking ... I don't want you to come to my room anymore.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGGIE
I like you fine, but you don't give enough. I'm looking for something more ...

Long moment.

AGGIE *
You might just like the idea of being romantic better than you like romance.

Then Aggie walks across the street to the hotel.

CUT.

BAR. NIGHT.

Dempsey having a glass.
Belly to the rail.
Several old boys having a good time beyond.

DEMPSEY
Barkeep.

The small round man slides up.

BARKEEP
Want another.

DEMPSEY
Don't see any reasons against it.

His glass is refilled.

DEMPSEY
You know I haven't been this way in a couple of years.

Dempsey goes slightly shy.

DEMPSEY
There used to be a Mrs. Patterson who worked around here.

The Barkeep smiles.

CUT.

BOARDWALK. NIGHT.

Dempsey moving toward the end of town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stops at a small Victorian housefront.
Knocks.
Waits.
Door opens.
Buxom woman looks out.
In the parlour behind are several half-clad women.

DEMPSEY
Howdy.

Nice big smile from the lady.
Door swings further open.
Then closes after he enters.

CUT.

PRESTON COMBS. NIGHT.

Seated at the mahogany desk in his den.
He removes an old cigar box from one of the drawers.
Lifts out a photograph of his wife, dead for fifteen years.
Then a snapshot of himself as a young man.
A photograph of Gishboy at the age of five.
Takes a wedding ring from the box.
Finally puts the ring and pictures back into the container.
Returns the cigar box to the desk.
From another drawer he pulls out an Army .45.
Snaps the clip out, loads it.
Leaves it on the desk.
Turns off the electric light.
Walks out.

CUT.

POLICE STATION. PORCH. NIGHT.

Darkened room, one table lamp beyond.
Lights of the city illuminate the porch.
Kells seated by the entrance.
His guns in front of him, along with a box of shells.
Harry Walker sipping coffee by the window.

WALKER
Just don't seem right.

Pause.

WALKER
Between you and Preston my choices are real poor.

Kells breaks open the Parker ten gauge.
Feeds an oily cloth down one barrel.

WALKER
I'm either a bad policeman or my town gets shot up.

KELLS
All you have to do is keep everybody off the street. You don't need to help.

WALKER
Don't see how I can let Preston come in here and take Gishboy ... wouldn't look too good for me, would it ...

Kells looks at Walker.

KELLS
I thought all you worried about was your town.

WALKER
Yeah, I worry about this town. It's my responsibility. If I don't like that ... I'll be honest with you about another thing ... I'm worried about my skin.

KELLS
That doesn't make you special.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER
It's different for me than you, Kells. You're a stranger that just drifted in ... I'm planning on running for Congress next year. I've got a lot more to lose.

KELLS
Funny how people on the other side of the fence never see it that way.

WALKER
I'll tell you about your side of the fence ... The mistake you made was not to settle down. Just passing through is out of style. On top of that you're a bounty hunter. There's none of them left at all.

Kells smiles.

KELLS
You know how it is ... Some people always pick the losing side.

WALKER
Why don't you tell me just what you've got over there on that losing side of yours.

KELLS
The law.

That's not what Harry Walker wanted to hear.

WALKER
I'll tell you about the law. I don't want anybody breaking it around here. Including you.

KELLS
Anything you say, Sheriff.

Kells starts loading the Winchester. And keeps smiling.

CUT.

OPEN COUNTRY. DAWN.

The first light of day breaks on the horizon.
Desert flowers begin to show on the rolling hills beyond.

CUT.

PRESTON COMBS RANCH. DAWN.

Eleven men mounted in the courtyard.
Ready to ride.

MEN IN THE SADDLE

Doyle, Larney, Horn, Rollins, Waddell, Stallcup, Lathrop, Bodie, McKay, Wood and Mordecai Brown.
All of them with booted Winchesters.
They unlimber.
Begin to jack and load.
Rifles, pistols being broken down, loaded ...
Snap, click, snick, snick.
Bullets fed into chambers ...
A crescendo of potential violence ...

THREE MEN

Jack, LeMaster and French walk five horses up from the stable.
Each carrying a saddle gun.
Wash moves with the others.
Unarmed.
They pull the horses up near the others.
Stand and wait.
Preston Combs and Keaton come out of the house.
Move toward the horses.
Preston eyes his men.
Army .45 in his waistband.

PRESTON

Today I'm taking on the town and the law. Anybody convinced I'm doing the wrong thing, speak your piece right now. Anybody riding with me, six months extra pay.

A long moment.
Wash steps toward Preston.

WASH
Mr. Combs, I been thinking ...

CONTINUED:

Pause.

WASH
Not everybody's cut out for this sort of thing.

Wash takes off his hat.

WASH
I'm real sorry letting you down this way.

Keaton brings up Preston's horse.
He swings up into the saddle.
Looks at Wash.

PRESTON
The way I always looked at it, it's better being sorry for something you did than something you didn't.

Spins his mount.
Rides.
His men fall in behind.

WASH

Standing there.
Small and alone.
Watching them go.

CUT.

CEMETERY. DAWN.

The PRIEST faces an open grave.
A young Latin wearing a surplice stands opposite.
A simple coffin rests on the ground.
Aggie close to the gravesite.
Behind her, Kells ...
To one side and behind him, Dempsey and Moon.
Also the whores from Aggie's wedding.

PRIEST
Ergo sum resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, etiam si mortuus fuerit, vivet. Kyrie, eleison. Christie, eleison. Kyrie, eleison.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Priest turns and goes to the coffin.

PRIEST
Oremus. Hac, quaesumus, Domine. hanceum servo tuo defunto misericordium, ut factorum suorum in poenis non recipiat vicem, qui tuam in votis tenuit voluntatem. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

The Priest turns, genuflects.
Crosses himself, rises.
The coffin is lowered.
Someone plays the harmonica.
Gravediggers begin to turn the earth.
Kells, Dempsey and Moon walk quietly away.

CUT.

MAIN STREET. MORNING.

Harsh sunlight.
Cars parked along the boardwalk.

LIVERY STABLE

Kells and Dempsey emerge through the double doors ...
Kells holds the Winchester and shotgun in his right hand.
.44 in his belt.
Rope in his left hand.
Dempsey carries his carbine.
They walk on toward the jail.

INSIDE THE POLICE STATION

Harry Walker behind his desk, Moon nearby.
Kells and Dempsey walk in.

KELLS
About time we got started.

WALKER
You sure this is the best way.

KELLS
Unless you got a better idea.

Walker takes the keys and goes to the cell area.
Kells follows.
Dempsey and Moon stay by the door.

CELLS

Harry Walker goes to Gishboy's cage.
Starts to unlock it.

WALKER
Man's going to let you out.

Gishboy gets up off his bunk.
Big smile at Kells.

GISHBOY
I figured you'd be yellow in the end.

Kells walks into the cell.

GISHBOY
Never had me fooled one bit.

Kells drops the noose over his head very fast.
Pulls it tight.
Then jerks him back toward the outer office.

STATION OFFICE

Kells picks up the shotgun.
Looks at Moon.

KELLS
Let's go.

They go over to the side door, leading Gishboy.

KELLS
Be right back.

DEMPSEY
We'll be here.

CUT.

ALLEYWAY

Kells, Gishboy and Moon step down out of the station house.

BEHIND MAIN STREET

A succession of rough shacks, chicken coops and pigsties crowd behind the houses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kells, shotgun by his side, leads Gishboy and Moon through the back yards.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP

The PROPRIETOR has just lathered up a customer.
Opposite, two more patrons wait their turn.
The Barber looks up as Kells, Moon and Gishboy enter from the back.

KELLS
Got a customer for you.

Barber and customers very nervous.

KELLS
We're in a hurry.

Kells looks at him.
The Barber pulls the sheet from the man in the chair, hands him a towel.
The other customers get up and bolt out the door.
Kells pushes Gishboy down into the barber's chair, takes the rope and ties it to the base.
Then picks up the shotgun.

BARBER
Lot of people around here think this town would have been better off if you'd never shown up.

Pause.

KELLS
You can shave him nice and close.

The Barber throws the sheet over Gishboy.
Moon pulls a chair up.
Then leans back, carbine propped beside him.
Kells takes a hot towel from the warming pan.
Drops it over Gishboy's face.

KELLS
Any trouble with him, give the rope a real hard jerk.

Moon smiles up at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KELLS
Make sure this barber's out of here before it starts.

Kells goes out through the curtains to the back room.

CUT

STATION HOUSE. MORNING

Harry Walker at his desk.
Checking out his .38 Police Special.
Small greying mirror on the wall.
Dempsey in front of it, staring at himself.
Kells comes through the side door.
Dempsey still looking into the mirror.
Sees Kells, turns to face him.
Slightly embarrassed because of the badge he's wearing.

DEMPSEY
Always thought about being on the other side of a badge. Leastways for an hour or two.

WALKER
Putting that on don't make it legal.

DEMPSEY
Don't worry, Harry, I won't do you out of a job.

Dempsey turns back to the mirror.
Looks once more.
Then picks up a big cake of white soap.

KELLS
You got your spot picked out.

WALKER
I'll be ready. More I think about it, less I like the idea of people breaking into my jail.

Kells and Dempsey walk out the door.

CUT.

BOARDWALK

Kells moves to the far side of the porch.
Leans against the wall.
Winchester to one side, shotgun at the other.
Dempsey seats himself in Harry Walker's wicker chair.
Takes out a pocket knife and starts to whittle at the soap.

DEMPSEY
How do you figure it.

KELLS
He's a general. He'll split his bunch and stay out of it until it comes down to the finish. You take the high side, I'll cover this end. Either one of us gets in trouble, the other can move in for back up. Keep your barrel hot. As long as you're shooting they're going to be ducking.

DEMPSEY
I'll make sure they know they're talking to Arthur J. Dempsey.

Dempsey keeps whittling.

DEMPSEY
Kells.

Pause.

DEMPSEY
You think we'll make it.

KELLS
My father was a private in the Army ... He asked that question to his Sergeant before the first shoot up that his regiment ever got into.

Silence.

DEMPSEY
You can give me the answer any time you're ready.

KELLS
The Sergeant said, "Kid, don't ask a question when you know there isn't an answer. It just wastes everybody's time."

DEMPSEY
Mighty smart man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Keeps on whittling.

CUT.

STREET

Window shutters closing in stores and shops.
Boardwalk vacant of pedestrians.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP

Gishboy now clean-shaven.
The Barber wipes him down, then looks to Moon.

MOON
Now give him a haircut.

Reaching for the comb and scissors, the Barber gives Moon a pained look.

CUT.

PORCH

Kells by the wall.
Dempsey rocks gently back and forth in the chair.
A pile of soap shavings on the floor beside him.
The cake is beginning to resemble a rowboat.

STREET

Movement down the way.
Kells and Dempsey look off in that direction.

PRESTON COMBS

Rides up slowly at the far end of the street.
On either side Keaton, French, LeMaster and Jade.
Now within sight of the police station.
They pull their mounts to a halt.

PORCH

Kells and Dempsey waiting.

STREET

Preston sits loose on his horse.
Complete command.
French and Jade pull their saddle guns from the scabbards.
Rest the stocks on their knees.
With one hand French jacks his rifle.

PORCH

Dempsey rests the soap on the rail in front of him.
Then reaches back for his carbine.
Kells lifts the .50 calibre Winchester.

GRAVEYARD

Aggie watches as the gravediggers finish ...

STREET

A long silence.
Followed by the distant sputter of an engine.
A motorcycle appears from an alleyway near Preston.
It turns down toward the station house.

PORCH

Kells and Dempsey watch the motorcycle go by.
Rider oblivious to them.
They look back up the street.
French and Jade work their horses to the center of the avenue.
Sound of pounding hoof-beats.

OPPOSITE END OF THE STREET

Mordecai Brown leading an eleven-man charge.
Preston's riders spread the width of the road.
All of them at full gallop toward the station house.

DEMPSEY AND KELLS

Swing around and see the riders thundering toward them.

DEMPSEY
God damn.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP

Gishboy, very excited, tries to watch.
Rope preventing him.
Moon nudges him with the carbine.
Then stares out the window.

MOON
Time for you to get on out.

The Barber scurries through the curtains and out the back door.

CUT.

STREET

Mordecai Brown's horses racing onward.
The motorcyclist approaching them.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDER

Panics.
Slams the brakes hard, skids and slides.
Horses are almost on him.
He races away from the oncoming horsemen.
Too late.
The motorcycle rider disappears beneath crashing hooves.

STREET

The horsemen seventy yards from the station house.

PORCH

Kells raises his Winchester

STREET

Horsemen now fifty yards away.
They begin firing at the police station.

KELLS

Squeezes the trigger.
.50 calibre blast.

STREET

Larney drops his carbine.
Clutching his throat, he falls sideways.
His horse spins and canters back the way it came.

CUT.

HOTEL LOBBY

Townspeople gathered around the windows.
Sound of continuous gunfire.

CUT.

PORCH

Bullets thud into the woodwork.
Dempsey lets one go.
Then another.
And another.

KELLS

Levers a spent round from the chamber.
Blasts.
Blasts again.

STREET

A horse screams and fall.
Rollins makes a dash for the livery stable.
His horse wobbles to its feet.
Trots off after the other horses.

PORCH

Dempsey slips into the alley on his side of the station house.

KELLS

Horses thirty yards from him.
He grabs the ten gauge.
Moves into the narrow opening on the far side of the police station.

STREET

The riders duck low as they pass.
A hail of slugs crashes into the station house door.
Three riders make a running dismount.
Streak into the alley opposite Dempsey.
The other horsemen pound on toward Preston.
Dempsey fires at the retreating riders.

KELLS

Pumps five shots from the Winchester into the shadows across the way.

CUT.

GRAVEYARD

Aggie still sitting beside the gravesite.
From the far end of town, the distant crack of rifle fire.

CUT.

POLICE STATION

Harry Walker at the window.
Empties his .38 at the alleyway opposite.
Goes to the gun rack behind the desk, takes down a short-barreled twelve gauge.
A burst of gunfire outside as he pulls open the desk drawers.

CUT.

HOTEL

Spectators peering through the glass.
A stray bullet hits the window taking out four panes.
Scramble and panic as the townspeople hit the floor.

CUT.

POLICE STATION

Harry Walker at the front window.
He drops a shell into each barrel of the shotgun.
Snaps the breech shut as a bullet smashes into the glass beside him.
He ducks, runs over to the side window.
Dempsey firing below him in the alley.

CUT.

OUTSIDE THE STATION

Kells looks around the edge of the wall.
At the far end of the street, Mordecai Brown and his men have dismounted.
Horses standing in a tight group.

PRESTON COMBS

Flanked by Keaton and LeMaster.
He gestures toward the far side of the street.
Mordecai Brown leads five men at a run.

MORDECAI BROWN

His men behind him.
They go to the back of the buildings on far side of the street.

DOYLE AND HORN

Leap onto a porch five houses up from the police station.
Edge their way down the boardwalk.

ACROSS FROM THE POLICE STATION

A volley of gunfire from the shadows

KELLS

Blasts twice in return.

GRAVEYARD

The shooting still distant.
Aggie walks down the grassy slope toward Main Street.

BEHIND MAIN STREET

Jade and French ride warily through back yards.
Dismount three buildings up from the police station.
Jade pulls himself onto a shed, then climbs up on the roof of the building.
French passes up a carbine.
Jade balances on the parapet, leaps to the adjoining roof.
French, below him, works his way through the chicken runs.

KELLS

Gun ready.

DEMPSEY

Waiting.

STREET

Lathrop looks out between two buildings.

KELLS

Levers one into the chamber of his Winchester.
Blasts.

LATHROP

Pulls back as the wall disintegrates next to him.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP

Moon at the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Very tense.
Tries a shot at Rollins in the livery stable across the way.
Gishboy in a quiet panic.

CUT.

BEHIND THE FAR SIDE OF MAIN STREET

Mordecai Brown and five others trot behind the opposite buildings.
They pass McKay, Wood and Lathrop.
Move across from Kells.
Mordecai Brown waves the five to the next building.
Then peers at the police station.
Kells out of sight.
Mordecai Brown gets an angle on Dempsey, tries a shot.
Misses.
Dempsey pounds one back.
Ricochet.

STREET

Past Dempsey's alley.
Doyle and Horn work their way onto the porch next to the police station.
Moving carefully.

JADE

Stepping across the rooftops.
Nears the station house.

DEMPSEY

Hears the footsteps, whirls his carbine.
Faces upward.
Blue sky.
Silence.
French steps into the alley at the back of the police station.
Dempsey's eyes go to French.
He blasts and levers as French starts out of sight.
Dempsey triggers again.
Click.
The hammer hits an empty breech.
French moves back into the middle of the alley.
Raises his carbine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Slow and easy.
Knowing he's got Dempsey.

INSIDE THE STATION

Harry Walker at the window.
French below him.
Walker pulls up the twelve gauge.
Dempsey going for his hip gun.
Blast.
Window disintegrates.

ALLEY

Buckshot slamming into French.
Dempsey showered by falling glass.

ROOF

Jade next to the police station.
Looks down through the window at Harry Walker.
Aims. Fires.
Walker collapses onto the floor.
Collarbone shattered by the blast.

DEMPSEY

Spins, fires his pistol.
Jade ducks back beyond the roof line.
Bullets ricochet past Dempsey from across the street.
He turns, runs back down the alley, past the corner of the building.
Jade jumps the alley landing on the roof of the police station.
Doyle and Horn come to the alleyway Dempsey vacated.
They step across the porch of the station house.

FAR END OF MAIN STREET

Aggie moves onto the boardwalk in front of the bank.
All the shutters down tight.
She starts carefully toward the hotel.

KELLS

In the alley handing shells to Dempsey.

JADE

Pads over toward the far parapet.

KELLS

Hears the footsteps.
Twists and fires his Winchester upward.
Jade topples, then crashes fifteen feet into the alley.
Corpse smashing at Dempsey's feet.

BARBERSHOP

Moon near the door.
Volley of gunfire from down the street.

GISHBOY
Help me. Over here. Christ, somebody help me.

Moon puts the carbine to Gishboy's ear.

MOON
I'll end it for you right now, you don't shut up.

CUT.

STREET

Bodie and Stallcup race across the avenue.
Join Doyle and Horn on the porch of the station house.

KELLS

Bullets crashing around him.
Edges back to the side door of the police station.
Dempsey one step behind.

THE FOUR ON THE PORCH

Look through the station window.
Harry Walker on the floor.
Wounded, rolling in pain.

CUT.

INSIDE THE POLICE STATION

Door kicked open.
Stallcup, Doyle and Horn stride over to the cell entrance.
Harry Walker reaches across the floor.
Trying for his pistol a few yards distant.
Bodie cuts him off, kicks the gun away.
Then boots Walker in the ribs.
Follows the other three toward the cell area.
Another kick and the second door swings wide.

CUT.

KELLS

In the alleyway.
He draws back the hammers on the ten gauge.
Pulls open the side door of the station house.
Steps in.

CUT.

INSIDE THE STATION

Four men looking at empty cells.
Explosion of buckshot rips above their heads.
They turn.
Kells very calm.
Shotgun held easy.
Slowly the four men lower their guns.
Then drop them on the floor.

CUT.

STREET

Dempsey takes a look through the side door of the station house.
Moves up the alley toward the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now very quiet.
No gunfire.
Dempsey makes a break for it.
Hits the boardwalk at a run.

DEMPSEY

Fast down toward the barbershop.
Bullets crash around him.
Makes it to the hardware store.
Drops into the passageway.

INSIDE THE HOTEL

Citizens of Monroe City crowded on the floor.
All very scared.
Mrs. Rickabaugh near a window.

BARBERSHOP

Rifle fire coming closer.
Still nothing for Moon to do.

MOON
Aw, shit.

He comes back from the window, turns, sees himself in the mirror.
Lifts the carbine to his hip, blasts.
Glass shatters.

AGGIE

Two buildings up from the barbershop.
She sees Moon step into the doorway of the shop.

STREET

Mordecai Brown and five men make a dash along a porch.
Dempsey gets off a shot, wings one of them.
Mordecai Brown's men reach the next alley.

INSIDE THE POLICE STATION

Kells locks the cell door on four hatless men.
Walks into the office, carrying their Stetsons.
Looks at Harry Walker.

KELLS
A wound like that's going to get you a lot of votes.

WALKER
I'm banking on it.

OUTSIDE THE STATION

The front door cracks open.
Wait.
Nobody fires.
Preston, Keaton and LeMaster in the distance.
Gunmen across the street.
Four hats float down into the dust.
Suddenly a hail of bullets smash into the station door.
Kells slams it shut.

CUT.

KELLS

Slips out of the side door of the station house.
A slug ricochets by.

STREET

Dempsey by the hotel.
He sees a movement.
Levers two off.
Tries a third.
Gun empty.
He ducks down as wood splinters around him.

BEHIND THE BARBERSHOP

Aggie hammering on the back door.

AGGIE
Moon, Moon, Moon.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP

Moon hears the banging.
Moves to the back room door.
Gishboy alone in the front.
Screams.

GISHBOY
Get me out. For Christ sake, help me. Get me out.

CUT.

ROLLINS

Hears Gishboy's shout from the livery stable.
Makes a dash for the barbershop.
A slug from Dempsey's revolver kicking dust at his feet.

CUT.

BARBERSHOP

Rollins runs through the doorway.
Stops.
Gishboy in the chair screaming.
Moon in the back room opening the door for Aggie.
Rollins sees him through a gap in the curtains.
Shoots once.
Shoots again.
Curtains jump, the bullets ricochet off the stove and wall.
Moon wheels, carbine to his hip.
Aggie dives behind the stove.
Moon and Rollins advance towards each other, levering shots as they go.
Firestorm.
Gishboy howling.
Aggie screaming.
Curtains shredding.
The eighth shot knocks Rollins back.
The ninth comes from Rollins' carbine as he crashes back into the window.
Exploding glass as he falls out into the street.

MOON

Spins and goes down on his back.
Rollins' final bullet has torn across his cheek.

CUT.

STREET

Kells comes up past Dempsey.
Races toward the barbershop.

MORDECAI BROWN

Snaps a shot off.
McKay beside him dashes into the street.
Blasts at Kells.

KELLS

His Winchester roars twice.
McKay fall.

BARBERSHOP

Kells through the door.
Gishboy sees him, stops yelling.
Quiet.
Aggie helping Moon to his feet.
Moon feels the gash on his face.
Kells looks round the ruined shop.
He picks up Rollins' hat.
Walks through the open doorway.

KELLS

Throws the hat into the street in front of him.
Long wait.
Dempsey by the hotel, carbine up.
Slowly Mordecai Brown comes out of the passageway diagonally opposite him.
Silence.
The other men filter out from between the houses.
Mordecai Brown leads them up the street toward Preston.
Kells calls over to Dempsey.

KELLS
Let's do it.

BOARDWALK

Aggie leads Moon out of the barbershop, across into the hotel.

DEMPSEY

Passes them.
Follows Kells into the barbershop.

FAR END OF TOWN

Wood, Lathrop, Waddell and Mordecai Brown climb onto their horses.
Mordecai looks over to Preston, Keaton and LeMaster.
Then down the street.

KELLS

Comes out of the barbershop with Dempsey and Gishboy.
His Winchester trained on Gishboy.
They walk up the street toward the gallows.
Dempsey, a step behind, carries the rope.

INSIDE THE HOTEL

Aggie leads Moon through the lobby.
Helps him down onto a sofa.
Mrs. Rickabaugh moves to his side.

STREET

Kells, Dempsey and Gishboy now at the base of the gallows.
Gishboy hesitates.
Kells nudges him with the Winchester.
They climb the steps.

MORDECAI BROWN

Watching as the rope goes over the beam.
Looks back to Preston.

PRESTON
Stay at it.

MORDECAI BROWN
You don't pay that much, Mr. Combs.
I think you better fight your own fight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spurs his horse as he wheels round and canters away from town.
Wood, Lathrop and Waddell follow.

PRESTON COMBS

Looks down toward scaffold.

KELLS

Knotting the rope to the base of the gallows.

PLATFORM

Dempsey leans his carbine against the upright, then puts the noose over Gishboy's head.

STREET

Kells looks up at Dempsey.

KELLS
You stay out of this, Arthur J.
Just keep a hand on that lever ...
One more thing, I'd appreciate
it if I could borrow your sidearm.

Dempsey hands across his pistol.
Smith and Wesson .44.

PRESTON COMBS

Gets off his horse.
Looks up at Keaton and LeMaster.
They climb down beside him.
Start walking toward the gallows.

KELLS

Sets aside his Winchester.
Walks to the middle of the street.
One .44 in his waistband.
The other in his left hand at his side.

GISHBOY

On the platform
Tears in his eyes.

DEMPSEY

Now at ground level.
Both arms above his head.
Holding the long wooden trip-lever to the gallows.

AGGIE

Steps into the hotel porch.
Townspeople filing out behind her.

PRESTON

Army .45 in his belt.
Walking.
Keaton and LeMaster flank him on either side.

PRESTON
You two staying in.

Pause.

KEATON
I don't think so.

LeMASTER
I'm sorry, Mister Combs. I can't go it.

KELLS

In the center of the avenue.
Waiting.

HARRY WALKER

Stumbles out in front of the station house.
One hand clutching his shattered collarbone.
The other holding the .38 Police Special.
Kells and Preston in the street before him.
Walker shouts at the two men.

WALKER
What the hell do you think this is. Combs, you're under arrest. Kells, you can't hang a man in this town.

STREET

Neither Kells nor Preston look at Walker.

HARRY WALKER

Raises the .38.
Fires two warning shots.

KELLS

Ignoring Walker's bullets as they kick at his feet.
Watching the three men approach.

HARRY WALKER

Swings the pistol toward Combs.
Triggers.
The hammer hits a spent cartridge.
Walker throws the gun into the street.

WALKER
God damn it, you can't do this.
Do you hear me.

DEMPSEY

Hands still gripping the lever.
Shouts over at Walker.

DEMPSEY
Don't get between them, Harry.
Just get yourself killed.

WALKER

Looks at Dempsey.
Knows there's nothing more he can do.
He eases his good shoulder against the station house door.

STREET

Kells waiting.
Preston Combs has stopped twenty yards away.

KELLS
This thing is all over. Your son's going back to prison ... now ride on out.

PRESTON
If I shoot you, Gishboy gets hung.

KELLS
That's right. There's no way you can win.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Preston Combs looking evenly at Kells.

PRESTON
I get past you, I might have time to cut him down.

KELLS
If the fall doesn't snap his neck.

GISHBOY
Don't do it, Preston. God, don't do it. Please, God, don't.

Kells just waiting.
The moment extends.
Then Preston smiles.

PRESTON
God damn it, Kells, when I met you I thought you were going to give me some fun ... Like old times ... Now you went and spoiled it all.

Pause.

PRESTON
You keep him, Kells, you want him more than I do.

Turns his back on Kells and starts up the street.
Gets four steps.
Pulls the .45.
Spins.
Blasts.

KELLS

Both .44's coming up.
Blasts twelve times.
Cuts Preston Combs twice through the middle.
Makes him dead on the street.

DEMPSEY

Hand still on the lever.
Watching Kells ...

GISHBOY

Face gone white.
Rope around his neck.

AGGIE

Watching.
Townspeople behind her begin moving out into the street.
Mrs. Rickabaugh moves alongside.

KELLS

Just looking at dead Preston Combs.
Then slowly turns, steps toward the gallows.
Stops in front of Gishboy.

GISHBOY
Don't do it. Please don't.

Kells looking at him.
Like he doesn't exist.
Then reaches over, pulls the trip.
The trap door slams open.

GISHBOY

Screams.
Falling downward.
Disappears from sight.
A loud thump, then quiet.

ARTHUR J. DEMPSEY

Still beside the platform.
He doesn't have the look of a happy man.
Gishboy not hanging.
Lying in the street under the gallows.
Rope slack around him.

DEMPSEY
Big disappointment to me.
Figured I was going to see
a proper hanging.

KELLS
I thought I tied that knot real
tight ... Came as a big surprise
to me when it slipped.

Dempsey smiles.

CONTINUED:

Then moves over to Gishboy and takes the rope from around his neck.
The only living member of the Combs family continues to cry.
Kells looks up at Harry Walker.
The police chief still against the station house doorway.

WALKER
God damn you, Kells.

Street very quiet.

KELLS
You ought to know when you've won, Harry.

Kells turns.
Moves away.

AGGIE

Still standing on the hotel porch.
Mrs. Rickabaugh still behind her.
Waiting quietly as Kells approaches.

AGGIE
Looks like it all came out the way you wanted.

Kells looks at her.
He starts inside.

AGGIE
Wait ...

He stops.
Looks back.

AGGIE
The way something ends up counts as much as why you do it.

KELLS
Guess it depends on who you are.

Goes into the hotel ...

CUT.

DEPOT. FOLLOWING DAY.

Engine No.5 building up steam.
A few passengers climb aboard the train.

RICKABAUGH HOTEL

Kells walks out through the entrance.
He carries his black suitcase.
And the .50 calibre Winchester.
He steps on the boardwalk.
Morning sun in the street.
Watches a truck pull up at the blacksmith's.
Sees the smith start to talk things over with truck driver.
Then moves down the steps.

STATION HOUSE

Harry Walker leaning on the rail.
Bandaged arm held in a sling.
Kells stops opposite.
Looks up at Harry.

KELLS
How is it.

WALKER
I'll be okay.

Pause.

KELLS
Sometimes there's no avoiding things, Harry.

WALKER
Don't ever apologize, Kells.
It's a sign of weakness.

Pause.

KELLS
Sounds like you're learning.

Moves on down the middle of the street.
Walking in the middle means you don't care who's watching.
Dempsey falls into step next to him.

DEMPSEY
I want to thank you for handing Gishboy over to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KELLS
You earned him. I don't like carrying a debt.

Big smile from Dempsey.

DEMPSEY
Always like a man that clears his account.

A few silent steps.

KELLS
That thousand dollars you got coming. Couple hundred could help the girl get a start.

DEMPSEY
I'll think about it.

Kells gives him a glance.
A few more silent steps.

DEMPSEY
You want to tell me about the other girl.

KELLS
What other girl ...

DEMPSEY
Come on, Kells, don't go dummy on me, I'm talking about the one Gishboy raped.

KELLS
Her name is Emily De Santis. She lives in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

DEMPSEY
Relative of yours.

KELLS
No.

DEMPSEY
Good friend ...

KELLS
No, I only met her once ... She doesn't have any family ... What happened to her was wrong.

Pause.

CONTINUED:

KELLS
Somebody had to put things right.

DEMPSEY
Did you.

KELLS
I don't know.

They approach the gallows.
Kells stops and looks at it.

DEMPSEY
They ought to take that thing down. Don't need them much anymore.

They catch each other's eye a moment.
Then move on.

DEPOT.

Kells and Dempsey pass Moon, Aggie and Mrs. Rickabaugh. The patrolman and the two women standing next to one another.

TRACKSIDE

Kells headed straight for the train.
Doesn't say goodbye to Moon and Aggie.
But gives them a look.
Then starts to board the Pullman.

DEMPSEY
Kells ...

Kells looks back.
But there's nothing really to say.
Dempsey knows it.
So does Kells.
Pause.
Then Kells disappears inside.

DEMPSEY

Standing there as the train begins to move.

DEPOT

The locomotive groans forward.
Slowly gathering speed.
Dempsey, Aggie, Moon and Mrs. Rickabaugh become small figures who stand and watch ...
The train pulls off into the far distance.

END